

ABSTRACT

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-CONCEPT, ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, AND RACIAL IDENTIFICATION AMONG AT-RISK AFRICAN-AMERICAN ADOLESCENT MALES

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The primary focus of this research was to evaluate the relationship of positive self-concept, academic achievement and racial identification among African-American adolescent males who were at-risk for educational and social failure. This study further involved a thorough investigation of the plight of African-American males and examined why they are sometimes labeled as an "endangered species." African-American youth who are at-risk are those students who may not complete their high school career by earning a diploma or gain appropriate skills for the twenty-first century. African-American youth at-risk also includes those students who fall victim to one or more social barriers which prohibit their success.

Research indicates that social barriers which foster at-risk behavior include inadequate education, poverty, school environment, crime, and anti-social behavior, racism and discrimination, unemployment, family structures, drugs, and suicide. More specifically, review of the literature revealed that African-American students with positive self-concepts have scored higher on standardized tests and achieve higher grades in school. Research on the relationship between positive self-concepts and academic

achievement can assist counselors and educators in problem solving. African-American students who positively identify with their race and culture reach high educational endeavors. It is hypothesized that students who have positive self-concepts will also possess positive racial identification and value academic achievement as evidenced by school records.

Survey research was used to conduct this investigation. Forty subjects from various schools were selected to participate in this study. All subjects were African-American adolescent males. Instrumentation employed the use of two surveys including the “Tennessee Self - Concept Scale” and an “Adolescent Racial Identification Questionnaire.” Additionally, students completed a Demographic Profile. All instruments were completed within forty-five minutes. Student grade point averages in the core curriculum courses were used to measure academic achievement.

It is proposed that the findings of this study will strengthen that area of research which is needed to promote more successful experiences for this population. As a result, local communities as well as the entire nation can further empower individuals to decrease the number of African-American males prone to educational and social failure.

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ACHIEVEMENT, AND RACIAL IDENTIFICATION AMONG AT-RISK
AFRICAN-AMERICAN ADOLESCENT MALES**

A DISSERTATION

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SERVICES**

BY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM AND ITS COMPONENTS	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
PROBLEM BACKGROUND	3
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	7
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	9
DEFINITION OF TERMS	10
RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	11
LIMITATIONS	11
SUMMARY	11
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	13
INTRODUCTION.....	13
ADOLESCENTS.....	15
SELF-CONCEPT/SELF-ESTEEM.....	22
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT	28
RACIAL IDENTIFICATION	31
RELATED LITERATURE	32
Education	32
Unemployment	35
Poverty	35
Family Structure	36
Crime and Antisocial Behavior	39
Suicide.....	41
School Environment	43
Motivation	44
SUMMARY	45
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY.....	47
METHODOLOGY	47
SITE/SETTING.....	47
HYPOTHESES	48
SUBJECT POOL.....	49
SAMPLE.....	49
INSTRUMENTATION.....	50
PROCEDURES.....	51
DATA COLLECTION.....	52
DATA ANALYSIS.....	53
HUMAN SUBJECTS CONTRACT.....	53
SUMMARY	53
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS	54
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE.....	54
PROFILE OF ADOLESCENT RACIAL IDENTIFICATION	60
TENNESSEE SELF-CONCEPT SCALE RESULTS	67
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS	73
APPENDICES	87
APPENDIX A	87
APPENDIX B	91

TABLE OF CONTENTS CONTINUED

APPENDIX C 94

APPENDIX D 96

APPENDIX E 100

APPENDIX F..... 102

APPENDIX G..... 104

BIBLIOGRAPHY 109

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: RESPONDENTS' AGE	55
Table 2: POPULATION BY GRADE	56
Table 3: REPEATED A GRADE	56
Table 4: RESPONDENTS' GUARDIANSHIP	57
Table 5: PARENTS' EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF COMPLETION	58
Table 6: MOST INFLUENTIAL ON RESPONDENTS' EDUCATION	59
Table 7: PEER MOTIVATION	60
Table 8: RACIAL PREFERENCE	61
Table 9A: ETHNIC HOLIDAY CELEBRATION.....	62
Table 9B: ACCEPTS RACE AS REASON TO CELEBRATE	62
Table 9C: VALUES RACIAL HERITAGE	62
Table 9D: ANCESTRY INFLUENCE.....	62
Table 9E: EXPERIENCES RACIAL PRIDE.....	63
Table 9F: PEER PERCEPTION OF RACIAL IDENTITY.....	63
Table 10: RACIAL HERITAGE OF FRIENDS.....	64
Table 11: RACIAL SOCIALIZATION	64
Table 12: TEACHERS' LEVEL OF RESPECT	65
Table 13: RESPONDENTS' GRADE POINT AVERAGE	66
Table 13A: RESPONDENTS' GRADE POINT AVERAGE SUMMARY.....	67
Table 14: RESPONDENTS' SELF-CONCEPT T-SCORES	68
Table 14A: RESPONDENTS' SELF CONCEPT T-SCORE SUMMARY.....	68
Table 15: RESPONDENTS' ACADEMIC SELF-CONCEPT SCORES.....	69
Table 15A: RESPONDENTS' ACADEMIC SELF-CONCEPT SCORE	70
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE 1.....	105
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE 2.....	105
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE 3.....	106
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE 4.....	106
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE 5.....	107
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE 6.....	107
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE 7.....	108
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE 8.....	108

CHAPTER ONE

The Problem and Its Components

Introduction

In today's society many counselors, educators, social workers, and researchers write of the plight of African-American youth and their involvement with America's educational system (Sanders, 1997). Many studies show that some African-American males' academic achievement levels are not acceptable achievement rates. Kunjufu (1996) states that a positive self-concept and self-esteem is most important when facing challenges. His research promotes a positive self-concept and high self-esteem as a motivating factor of academic achievement. Yet, some researchers contend that African-American students mentally withdraw from the schooling process due to their view of racial issues and cultural isolation within the educational system (Ogbu, 1978, 1988, 1991, Fordham and Ogbu, 1986). Other studies, such as those conducted by Edwards and Polite (1992 p. 4), suggest that a clear view of racial identification (including racial issues, racism, and discrimination) is what helps to promote a stronger desire to be successful. The research of Edwards and Polite (1992, p. 5) further suggests that through an awareness of potential obstacles to success, many students exert more effort to become academically successful.

The Problem and Its Components

While positive self-concept/self-esteem issues are among the major concerns by counselors and educators, the lack of problem-solving skills used by school aged children

identifies an even greater concern for educators, as well as larger society. If students do not have basic thinking and social skills to solve/ resolve routine (and more complicated) problematic issues, it becomes easier for them to become conduct disordered as defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM -IV). If they do not gain and demonstrate necessary survival skills to become self-sufficient members of society, they can become more prone to use alternative means of survival such as acting out, maladaptive behavior, or juvenile delinquency. Here learning styles and teaching styles clash sometimes as a result of cultural misunderstandings causing the student anxiety.

Ogbu (1988) identifies culture as a shared way of living by a specific group of people. This way of life, according to Ogbu, represents varied customs, rituals, values, emotions, traditions, and norms that are interwoven into a set of behavioral patterns which helps one to survive within a given environment. Allowing the counselor to also serve as an on-site consultant towards helping both teacher and student understand and respect each other's cultural differences could be of great benefit to the educational system. As Irvine (1991 p. 22) indicates, teachers and students experience misunderstandings at school when they lack correspondence or when they are not synchronized as a result of cultural differences.

Strategies that will teach, support, enhance, and reinforce affective, creative, cognitive and social problem-solving skills will greatly contribute to the realm of possible solutions towards reducing maladaptive social skills and disruptive behavior in schools and communities. Efforts here could improve academic achievement while also defusing the potential of African-American males, as well as other students, of becoming at-risk.

It is the opinion of this writer that the views of at-risk African-American adolescent males, would greatly help researchers whose aim is to improve the short-term and long-term status of African-American males. Research revealed that compared to African-American females, Whites, and Hispanics, African-American school age males were particularly vulnerable to "academic disidentification" where success or failure mattered very little (Schroeder, 1998). While the failures exist for those who are not doing well, there are many who are likewise experiencing school success.

This researcher also believes that one of the greatest challenges facing educators today is finding ways to assist students to grow and develop through the attainment of a quality education. Traditionally, low achievement of minority students has been attributed to deficits in the child's personal, family, or cultural behavioral traits (Hale-Benson, 1986, p33). Therefore, throughout this country educators continue to examine ways to improve basic skills and adequate competency testing for all. The general belief, according to this writer, is that all students should be able to acquire minimal competencies that will lead to a high school diploma and opportunities to become productive citizens.

Problem Background

Almost twenty years ago, studies done by McCarthy and Clark (1981), Brookover and Lezotte (1979), and Edmonds and Frederiksen (1979) identified schools that were most effective for minority children who were educationally and socially disadvantaged. By today's standards, those same children would be referred to as at-risk for educational and social failure. They concluded that an effective school would be able to address the academic needs of the poor child and raise his or her academic status. In contemporary society it is evident that students who fail to achieve are represented in all races, cultures,

socioeconomic status, and genders. Helping all children to learn in a safe environment, as reflected in Goals 2000, remains a primary concern to educators across the nation. Goals 2000 is a nationwide task force consisting of the president and all fifty governors, and other appointed committee members. It addresses how each state will improve the quality of education for all children in American schools. Goals 2000 also seeks to make American students more academically and globally competitive.

During the 1960s, research on schools and student achievement concluded that the home background is the primary predictor of school success (Coleman, 1966). This concept was supported, during the seventies, by the work of Furves and Levine (1975), Averch (1972), and Jencks (1972). Their theory later became known as the Cultural Deficit Theory which suggested that much of what students learn while at school is germane to what they bring with them to school. Again they confirmed that family background is the strongest single indicator of differences in the way a child performs and achieves while at school. Assuming this is true, many African-American students (especially males) face a great obstacle -- the need to succeed with the reality of adverse circumstances confronting them. During the eighties (1980s), Kunjufu (1996), as well as others, declared that a person's positive self-concept and self-esteem are primary factors in determining his/her level of success. The role of peer influence was equally significant in determining how an adolescent would be influenced.

Hayes and Moses (1992), who are proponents of the all-male academic environments, observed that African-American males had a higher rate of failure in most public schools. The failure rates of African-American males can be attributed to a number which includes any combination of personal, social, or environmental factors. They

contended that improving students' self-esteem was paramount to them making better grades. Swann (1996), Gill (1992), and White-Hood (1994), have concluded that self-esteem is related to other life problems including those within the educational realm. Since the school is one of society's basic social institutions, it has, likewise, been held responsible for the growth and development of students of all ages. Other institutions include the family, community, and church.

It has been generally assumed that upon graduation, one is able to read, write, and compute according to a standard that will promote global competitiveness and successfulness in the world of work. Educators have become increasingly concerned with the growing number of students who fail to demonstrate necessary survival skills to achieve (Slavin, 1995). This concern is representative of the growing number of students who have been defined as academically at-risk. To help alleviate this problem some researchers have suggested a stronger African-American curriculum that will motivate students educationally. They contend that what today's youth need is more nurturing (Hale-Benson, 1989, p. 10).

Among African-American males, unfavorable social and emotional risks continue to grow. For example, many researchers refer to the African-American male as an endangered species. Leavy (1983) referenced an endangered species as one whose population is in danger of extinction due to poor environmental and social conditions. Greathouse and Sparling (1993) built on this concept by citing the African-American male as one who is at a major risk for economic survival beginning at birth and lasting until death. The implication here is that counselors must become strong advocates for the African-American male and help to ensure productive survival and stability. In 1988, the

Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life projected that seventy percent of African-American males may be imprisoned, awaiting trial, addicted to drugs, or murdered by the year 2000.

The decade of the 1990s has brought many challenges for counselors. This is especially true in the field of education where student support personnel are staffed in the majority of public schools. This writer acknowledges and research supports the fact that today's youth need guidance from adults now more than ever. Intervention strategies that will build self-confidence, encourage alternative choices, facilitate pro-active social interaction among peers, and increase more independent decision-making and problem solving is urgently needed for youth in today's society. Today's reality is that violence and verbal altercations continue to disrupt the educational cycle. This has grossly affected academic achievement rates (Snyder and Sickmund, 1995).

Research suggests that an estimated seven million young people between the ages of ten and seventeen, or one-fourth of all adolescents are especially vulnerable to high-risk behavior such as dropping out of school, school failure, alcohol and drug abuse, and pregnancy. Similarly another seven million are considered to be in a state of moderate risk for social failure. These groups of adolescents will have little chance for success as it relates to earning a decent salary, supporting a family, or participating in the community actively (Cuban, 1989). The Statistical Record of Black Americans (1995, p 151) reported that Blacks (African-Americans) committed more crimes (in proportion to its racial population) than other races. According to their data, the greatest concentration was in the Southwestern and Southeastern regions of the United States where African-

Americans were heavily populated. The need for effective intervention strategies to assist African-American youth is vitally important to our educational system and society.

As a result of their apparent state within the academic arena, many African-Americans choose to drop out of school. The high school dropout rate, in addition to the growing problems of delinquency, inappropriate social skills, and violence, are all indications that youth are in trouble and need more guidance. Hence, educators must use both traditional and non-traditional strategies to reach students in an effort to keep these problems from escalating. Interventions must include the growth and development of both the cognitive and affective domain. These include values, observable behavior, belief systems, attitudinal concerns, mores, and learning styles (Sanders, 1997). Counselors and educators must likewise seek to teach coping skills that will increase the African-American adolescents' chances of leading a productive life, while simultaneously minimizing academic failure, social inadequacies, self-destruction, violence and criminal behavior.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the relationship of self-concept, academic achievement, and racial identification among at-risk African-American adolescent youth. This research was also conducted to determine how to more effectively assist African-American adolescent males to grow towards more meaningful experiences and greater achievements within their own culture, community, and within their heterogeneous society. Likewise, this study examined whether a positive self-concept positively impacted academic achievement and racial identification.

Like anyone else, African-American males face many dilemmas that can negatively affect their lives. Jewelle Gibbs (1989) defined an endangered species as one whose

population is threatened due to unfavorable social and environmental conditions. Through a careful investigation of the current status of the African-American male in today's society, it becomes obvious that his plight is one with many social barriers. Some of these social barriers include, but are not limited to, inadequate educational attainment, poverty, criminal involvement, dysfunctional family structures, discrimination and racism, high unemployment rates, drug use and abuse, suicide, and social stereotypes.

Because education can serve as the foundation for upward mobility, this study focused on the at-risk adolescent African-American students' views of self-concept, academic achievement, and racial identification. Hence, identification will be discussed as it pertains to adolescents and the cultural experiences of at-risk African-American adolescent males. The aim was to gather information on the African-American adolescent males' views of self-concept, academic achievement, and racial identification. Efforts here can assist counselors and educators to understand adolescent males better.

The adolescent years have been described as a time to refocus and redirect students who have not yet crystallized their views on role identification (Erickson, 1968). As a result this investigator aspired to provide more research on at-risk African-American adolescent males and ways they could become more successful in mainstream society. Thus findings relative to the importance of academic achievement, a positive self-concept, and racial identification will contribute to existing research on how to improve the quality of life for adolescents in general and at-risk adolescent African-American males, in particular.

Theoretical Framework

To better understand adolescent development, it was essential to review their life stages according to developmental theorists. Erik Erickson, a noted developmental theorist, acknowledged the need for social acceptance throughout the eight developmental stages found within his concept of human growth and development. Erik Erickson, (1968) stated that human beings develop in psychosocial stages. He emphasized constant developmental changes throughout the human life cycle. Additionally Erickson's eight stages of development are revealed as humans go through the life span. Each stage includes a different developmental task that challenges individuals with the issues that they face. He believed that these kinds of issues represent a turning point of increased vulnerability and potential, as opposed to a catastrophe. The more an individual resolves a conflict successfully, the healthier that person developed (Santrock, 1996). Erickson further identified stage five as a time that focused on "identity" for the adolescent. As new roles are pursued during this stage, the adolescent struggles with identity diffusion, his cultural environment, as well as social interactions.

Lawrence Kohlberg's (1966, p. 17) research on adolescents suggested that one's social competencies and values were impacted by his cognitive development skills. Kohlberg (1981, p. 35) believed that thinking skills and moral development are crucial to the life of an adolescent. He further concluded that when faced with moral dilemmas, it is one's sense of reasoning that is important, not his final decision (Santrock, 1996). In like manner, Martin Hoffman's theory of moral development (1966) supported the work of both Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg (1981, p. 16) by citing the importance of cognitive abilities, reasoning skills, and their influence on moral behavior.

Research on African-Americans who have attained success in spite of obstacles, conducted by Edwards and Polite, has indicated that the one common trait for each of them was a spirit of empowerment. For them empowerment was a result of a positive sense of racial identity.

Definition of Terms

1. At-risk - any student who is in danger of leaving high school without graduating because of academic failure or other related problems (Swanson, 1991).
2. Educators - persons contributing to the emotional, academic, social, spiritual, financial, and/or physical well-being of a life-long learner of any age.
3. Endangered species - one that suffers a serious reduction in its population and faces the threat of extinction because of its exposure to unfavorable social and environmental conditions (Leavy, 1983).
4. Socioeconomic Status (SES) - a person's social and economic status.
5. Success for at-risk students - remaining in school with a positive attitude about achieving while learning to overcome the destructive factors aimed at destroying the African-American male.
6. Self-Concept – an individual's thoughts or understanding regarding himself/herself usually based on specific instances or occurrences.
7. Higher Academic Achievement – that level of school-based learning which is evidenced through successfully accomplishing a grade point average of 3.0 or better. This represents a “B” or higher.

8. Academic Achievement – that level of school-based learning which is evidenced through successfully accomplishing a grade point average of 2.0 or better. This represents a “C” by school systems where the subjects attend school.
9. Racial Identification – a state of racial consciousness that is reflected through one’s positive association with his/her race, its values, and traditions, as demonstrated through a process of personal ownership with the individual’s ethnic roots.

Research Questions

1. Do students who demonstrate positive self-concepts, as evidenced by the Tennessee Self Concept Scale, achieve higher grades in their schools?
2. What is the relationship between students who demonstrate positive racial identification, as determined by the Adolescent Racial Identification Questionnaire, and their level of academic achievement?

Limitations

This researcher acknowledges two major limitations of this study. They include 1.) the respondents’ level of honesty in completing the surveys and 2.) the limited size of the sample group selected to participate in this study.

Summary

Advancing one's personal life is paramount to upward mobility. A positive self-concept, academic achievement, and racial identification can have a major influence in that regard. Moving from mere survival to successful experiences appears to concern most Americans. This researcher chose to focus on issues that face at-risk African-American

adolescent males because helping them can positively impact their personal lives, their families, their communities, the African-American race, and society at large. Additionally the counseling profession can be strengthened through the discovery of what works best and for what groups of people. Theoretically, attention is given to the issue of "identity" as it pertains to adolescent development. Yet, the more specific focus addresses the need to understand the educational, social, and economic views pertaining to at-risk adolescent African-American males. Carefully understanding their perceptions could provide counselors, social workers, and psychologists with needed information to improve counseling services and program development that will enhance their lives.

Chapter two provides a profile of general information on the adolescent period, explains the at-risk paradigm, lists characteristics of the African-American adolescent, and establishes specific data on African-American males. It also lends itself to an explanation of the importance of self-concept, academic achievement, and racial identification as used within this study. Research on how other social indicators impact African-American males' lives will be discussed. Among the social indicators discussed will be education, unemployment, poverty, family structures, criminal behavior, suicide, school environment, motivation, drugs, and racism. In some cases limited or no information was available regarding at-risk adolescent African-American males. Efforts were therefore made to examine ways their lives can be affected through various social indicators as indicated by available data already revealed on the African-American male.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature

Introduction

Chapter two addresses the areas of self-concept and self-esteem, academic achievement, and racial identification. It also includes statistical data on at-risk adolescent males and African-American men in general. This research explores their current status and societal concerns that can hinder the African-American male in America. Special attention is given to the period of adolescent development in African-American adolescents.

It is therefore the opinion of this writer that prevention is more important than intervention and mediation is likewise more important than remediation. As a concerned African-American professional educator, this researcher has observed the valuable impact of a student's positive self-concept and high self-esteem to his overall growth and development. Similarly, observation has shown that negativity impeded progress and has hampered one's effort to try. Dennis Kimbro (1991 p.27) has stated that low self-esteem prevents the accomplishment of much. It seems logical that since education is conceived as a key to upward mobility, useful techniques that will enhance educational attainment and promote academic achievement must remain in the forefront of those whose mission is to positively impact the life of a child.

Kunjufu documented in 1996 that African-American children comprised approximately seventeen percent (17%) of all students who were enrolled in schools. They furthermore constituted over forty percent (40 %) of all special education placements; primarily in the areas of Behavior Disorders (BD) and Educable Mentally Retarded (EMR). Though disproportionately represented, African-American boys comprise eighty-five percent (85%) of the Black children placed in special education. The Special Education Program can be most valuable to a school for attempting to meet the individual special needs of all children. Nevertheless many teachers use its services because they do not know or understand how to teach children of different cultural backgrounds.

Certainly there exists success stories of other African-American males who are making the grades, succeeding in schools, participating in gifted programs, and earning scholarships to college. Yet the fact remains that this research study addresses social issues relevant to African-American males and attempts to discuss their social barriers and its significance on society.

Irvine (1991, p. 24) surmised that the distinct African-American culture prohibits adequate correspondence between African-American students and their teachers. She contended that this is generally true as it relates to the Black students' language, presentation of himself/herself and their ways of processing information. The decreasing number of African-American teachers and administrators also has contributed to this problem, according to Irvine.

In like manner, the issue of racial identification is of equal importance in this review of the literature. To this end W.E. B. DuBois (1903) wrote:

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness..., one ever feels his twoness – An American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

Throughout history, African-Americans have been constantly reminded that their presence is dominated by two competing processes. The first includes sustaining one's racial and cultural identities and the second addresses surviving within America's White-European male-dominated society. For African-Americans, discussing racial issues is a part of routine family life (Hale-Benson, 1986).

Adolescents

According to the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1996), many problems associated with the period of adolescence have a common base found in early childhood experiences. Among these experiences are lack of sustained guidance from adults who care; another is difficulty with academia. The report further revealed that addressing factors that contribute to problematic behaviors are likely to be successful intervention tools. The Carnegie Council indicated that essential requirements for ensuring healthy development must be met through the cooperative efforts of major institutions that shape adolescents' experiences, given the complexity of influences here. Institutions must begin with family and include schools, various neighborhood community organizations, health care facilities, and the media.

The social well being of adolescents is a pivotal concern for many. Their personal well being is linked to their sense of self (Gullotta, Adams, and Montemeyer, 1990, p. 21). Research by Rosenberg (1965) indicated that high self-esteem is associated with a sense of

control over one's life while low esteem was associated with feelings of not being in control. Low self-esteem was often linked to depression which only enhanced the negative view of self.

During the period of adolescent development, several behavioral patterns evolve that are in conflict with persons found within the adolescent's immediate environments. This stage is affected by a search for new identities and rapid changes in the adolescent's social and emotional growth. Persons who work with this population in schools, the home or community express feelings of discontent as their efforts to build meaningful relationships are often diminished. Even though the periods of adolescence and their behavior present a challenging experience, they can also promote joy. Enthusiasm and zeal can be a regular part of their life experience as they embrace life with vigor to all those who share their world (Blain, Thompson, and Whiffen, 1993) and therefore should be constantly reminded of their positive traits in order to help them create a positive self image.

Research on adolescents cite increases in youth crime, school dropout rates, adolescent suicide, alcohol and drug abuse, homelessness, and teen pregnancies. These increases confirm that all is not well in the lives of many of today's youth. Among the sources which attribute to this current state are poor communication between adolescents and adults, insufficient educational attainment, lack of appropriate role models, a lack of funding to promote positive programs for youth, and the "generation gap" (Bowen, 1988, p. 67).

Problems with an adolescent's social and behavioral development are likely to continue unless they acquire the skills that will allow them to resist peer pressure and

stand firm on their "own" value system. This confirmation of ideas has been described as the emerging of "Backbone." Primary components of "Backbone" are commitment to school success, displaying a positive value system and possessing social competency. The three segments and behavioral traits of "Backbone" are as follows:

Educational commitment: Educational goals, academic achievement, homework completion, school success.

Positive value system: Cares about helping people and their feelings, desires to help people, practices sexual restraint.

Social competence: Heightened self-esteem, assertiveness skills, decision-making skills, friendship development, planning skills, positive future outlook.

Understanding appropriate behavior for the adolescent years can seem difficult to pinpoint due to the transition from childhood to young adulthood. During the teen years more time is spent with peers, whereas less time is spent with family, as an identity of independence for the adolescent emerges. This independence is a behavioral demonstration that is indicative of one growing into young adulthood (Larson, Richards, 1991, p. 41). Although this view is upheld by most adolescents, most adults still feel a need to monitor activities in which adolescents are engaged. As adolescents repeatedly try to display independence, their behavior can be described as rebellious by the adults who observe them.

Ironically, even though monitoring the adolescent's peers, enforcing curfews, and keeping up with his social life can be a source of conflict, often he expresses a need for discipline through these activities. Adolescents regard it as a sign of love and care when

adults put forth the effort to keep up with them and make decisions regarding friends or other crucial matters within their life (Blain, Thompson, and Whiffen, 1993). The level of support an adolescent received often was indirectly correlated to the type of behavior he displayed (Savin-Williams, Demo, 1993). Some young people received much support by family, school, mentors, and the community while others received significantly less support. Savin-Williams continued his view by relating that given a choice to drink or use drugs by adolescents, the one factor that was most powerful was to what extent would parents be upset by this discovery.

Coping with major changes that occur during the adolescent and teen years can be problematic. The interpersonal relationship of adolescents have been referenced as either a source of harmony or a source of conflict (Takanishi, 1993). Getting along with peers and adults has been cited as a difficult task for some adolescents. Acting out, displaying disruptive, aggressive, or demonstrating uncooperative behavior many times is described as a lack of social skills and behavior. Youth who showed this type of behavior tended to react to the various changes that occurred in their lives rather than anticipate possible changes and plan accordingly. These behaviors are intensified as social, emotional, physical, and cognitive factors were referenced as change agents (Blain, Thompson, and Whiffen, 1998).

Parents and teachers of adolescents have continued to face behavior problems ranging from mild and routine behavior disruptions to criminal activities. Many of these behavioral infractions have been the result of low self-esteem and unsatisfactory interpersonal relationships (Harter, 1990). Adolescents have sought out other support systems when they didn't get the support they needed at home. Unfortunately, their

alternatives to home and school support may have involved increased activity in drug and alcohol abuse, juvenile delinquency, gang participation, or teenage pregnancies (Blain, Thompson, and Whiffen, 1993). These at-risk behaviors transcend race and culture.

In reference to race African-American adolescents comprised the largest visible ethnic minority group in the United States (Santrock, 1993). Most African-American youth stay in school, do not take drugs, do not marry prematurely and grow up to lead productive lives in the midst of social and economic obstacles (Santrock, 1996). The majority of African-American youth are spread across the various social classes and do not live in ghettos of inner cities (Bell-Scott and Taylor 1989; Burton and Allison, 1995). Yet there has remained a growing concern that far too many youth were becoming a part of the court system without an opportunity to encounter routine experiences of the norm. The beginning of their troubles have seemed to be an outgrowth of the fact that valuing an education has left much to be desired. Other problems were based on the foundation that far too many adolescents have to struggle with issues that adults themselves sometimes failed to properly address.

One investigation on problems affecting the lives of African-American adolescents revealed that there is a mixture of factors which have influenced their status (Wilson, 1987). Results of the investigation distinguished the African-American adolescents' situations as characterized by social isolation especially in poverty areas and where little interaction with mainstream society exists.

Approximately thirty million African-Americans are in the United States today. In 1990, about one-third of the Black population was under eighteen years old. Most African-Americans live in metropolitan areas; however, between 1980 and 1990, their

suburban population grew by twenty-nine percent. In 1990, the Black population exceeded one million in sixteen states and two million in three states – New York, California, and Texas. States in the South with populations of more than one million African-Americans include Georgia, Florida, and Louisiana (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1993).

This large Black population is indicative of the need for counselors and educators to learn how to work more effectively with African-American children. Black children can be found throughout the social classes (Gibbs, 1991; McLoyd, 1989) and in both urban and rural areas. The following identifies common characteristics of African-American adolescents in America. Living in America as a child or adolescent and as an African-American can have a negative influence on a young person because of stereotypical ideas from this society (Manning and Baruth, 1996 p. 84).

CHARACTERISTICS OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN ADOLESCENTS

- An African-American male teenager between the ages of 15 and 19 is nine times more likely than his White peer to be a homicide victim.
- One of every three African-American teenagers lives with an unemployed parent.
- One of every three African-American teenagers lives with a parent who did not graduate from high school.
- One of every two African-American teenager lives with only one parent.
- An African-American teenager is more than twice as likely as a White teenager to be enrolled in a remedial math class.
- Half of all African-American adolescents live in poverty (McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter, 1998, p 5).

Hence many ethnic groups can exclaim that their situation did not get there on its own, rather their experiences are based on a series of activities which led to their present state including racism and discrimination. Wilson (1987) investigated several factors related to problems of inner-city African-American adolescents. He found increased social isolation in poverty or low socio-economic environments and minimal contact with mainstream society. Poor job opportunities and the growing shift of middle-income African-Americans to the suburbs has not helped the African-American adolescent. Rather it has reduced leadership, lowered the tax base, decreased the educational political empowerment, and reduced other organizational support (Spencer and Darnbusch, 1990, p 45).

Currently there is a national trend to conduct research which will promote more effective decision-making on behalf of adolescents (Takanishi, 1993; Takanishi and Deleon, 1994; Zaslow and Takanishi, 1993). As such, Marion Wright Edelman (1994), President of the Children's Defense Fund and advocate for improved social policy for youth, has expressed that she is troubled by the social neglect of children and adolescents. She affirmed that the United States is near the bottom of industrialized nations in its treatment of young people. Edelman has remarked that our policy makers should move from "talk" to improved action as it relates to family values, safe schools and neighborhoods, and parent education. She acknowledged that without a stable foundation, it is hard to envision educational achievement.

Self-Concept/Self-Esteem

For many centuries, African-American people have lived in the United States. Originating from Africa and arriving in the United States as either slaves or explorers, African-Americans have been acquainted with “struggle” throughout history (Manning and Baruth, 1996 p. 82). One struggle that African-Americans have had to cope with is the concept of self. This has sometimes been a difficult situation because many times African-Americans openly acknowledge that they want to retain their African legacy and cultural heritage in order to feel comfortable with basic values and traditions. Other African-Americans, however, may feel more comfortable experiencing “acculturation” with the White European-American culture. Seemingly some people feel that acculturation is necessary for psychological and economical survival. The counselor’s role is again paramount in helping the adolescent to find balance between maintaining a certain degree of African heritage and also believing that there exists an equal opportunity for success in modern society (Manning and Baruth, 1996 p.89).

In terms of African Self-Concept the most basic understanding is “I am because we are and because we are therefore, I am.” Wade Nobles (1976) defined self-concept in the African tradition as one of interdependence of African people. That is, he contended that one’s definition of self-concept must also include the definition of one’s people. Here, defining the self includes recognizing or denying similar qualities and characteristics of one’s own self or of other people. An example of this would include one’s roots such as Ashanti, or Ibo or African, or Black/African-American. Nobles (1976) further contended that until the African-American acknowledges his/her cultural roots, he (she) will never be fully understood.

According to Dennis Kimbro (1991 p.180) a person's mental image forms the core of who he/she is. Kimbro also wrote that the more positive the self-concept the more equipped one is to cope with life's adversities. He also maintained that there is no greater force at a person's service than the combination of a strong mind and positive self-concept. African-American adolescents need fair opportunities to grow and develop into identities that are suitable for their culture and age group (Manning and Baruth, 1996, p. 84). Since the period of adolescent development has been described as a time of identity formation, it is especially important that individuals learn to accept their social, cultural, and age differences. This point of view could further strengthen the at-risk adolescent African-American male's self-concept and self-esteem. It could also help teachers, educators, and school personnel gain a better understanding of the child as learner and the world where he or she lives. A sound understanding of multicultural environments would provide school systems with information that would address needs and highlight strengths regarding the African-American culture (Stevens, 1996).

African-American parents have, through cultural tradition, been charged with the responsibility of promoting positive self-concept development in their children. They nurture their children's ego by explicitly affirming to their young that "you're just as good as the next person." Research has revealed that this adage reduces anxiety that may occur when the African-American child is compared to his/her European-American peer (Hale-Benson, 1986, p.64).

For the purpose of his research study, positive self-concept and self-esteem will be used interchangeably. The value a person puts on self-concept is explained through his /her positive self-concept or self-esteem. As such, self-esteem can be explained according

to one's understanding of himself as competent and successful as it relates to those persons with whom he compares himself (McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter, 1998, p.85). Harter (1990) has expressed that as children and adolescents continue to mature, their self-evaluations become more diverse and less global promoting a stronger bond between their self-knowledge and their performance. Hence, those children and adolescents who have had limited successful experiences are prone to participate in antisocial, deviant behavior in an effort to raise their level of self-esteem (B.T. McWhirter & J.J. McWhirter, 1995).

An individual's psychological well-being is often impacted by his decision to drop out or remain in school through its completion. Thus, most students who have dropped out of school regret that decision later, claiming it further promotes low self-esteem. It also intensifies personal dissatisfaction, environmental dismay, and with lack of opportunity, it decreases one's ability as well as one's aspiration to market himself occupationally. This is especially true among young people (McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter, 1988, p. 86). Low self-esteem oftentimes leads to feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness, and depression (Bagley, 1992; Stivers, 1990). A distorted and unrealistic view of self can likewise lead to unrealistic expectations of others, society at large, and the future (J.J. McWhirter and B.T. McWhirter, 1998).

To better understand self-concept and self-esteem, one should be cognizant of the fact that adolescents are motivated by their sense of who they are and what makes them different from others (Santrock, 1996). For the adolescent, self understanding identifies his cognitive representation of himself; the essence of his self-conceptions. His understanding is founded on the various roles he plays and membership categories of

which he partakes and defines his sense of self (Harter, 1990a, 1990b). Though only a part, self understanding greatly adds to the adolescent's identification (Damon and Hart, 1988).

Generally, a person is said to possess self-esteem if he believes that he is valuable to himself, family, friends, and others at-large. Many persons, who are trained in the field of education, agree that self-esteem is the root cause underlying most educational, personal, and social problems (Swann, 1996; Gill, 1992; White-Hood, 1994). However, these educational researchers have a broad range of definitions for self-esteem.

Dr. Rosenberg (1965), a renown researcher on self-esteem defined self-esteem as the magnitude to which the individual views himself as worthy; independent of whether he regards himself superior to others (p.30). In his book, Coping Through Self- Esteem, McFarland wrote:

... self-esteem is how warm and loving you feel toward yourself. Your feelings about yourself come from your convictions about yourself as a capable, competent person having worth. Feeling capable is having self-confidence, viewing yourself as able to cope effectively with the challenges of life. Your self-esteem is a result of living up to your own standard of values. Your self-esteem is a result of your evaluation of yourself and the extent to which you believe yourself to be a capable, worthy person.

Thomas (1991) regarded self-esteem as the degree of respect and pride one has for himself and in what he does. It includes a clear understanding of one's internal foundation. More specifically, self-esteem can answer many questions a person has about his life. He (Thomas) has said that self-esteem answers the main question of whether a person likes himself and to what extent.

Many social scientists believe that numerous social problems are rooted in low self-esteem or the lack thereof. These researchers suggest that serious problems such as

drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, dropping out of school, and crime are the result of issues that affect one's self-concept or esteem (Thomas, 1991; Rosenberg 1965; Burns, 1990; Johnson, 1991). This view does not imply that everyone with low self-esteem will choose a destructive path. This view does hold however, that self-esteem influences the way a person thinks, the decisions he makes, and how he feels about self (Swann, 1996; Johnson, 1991; Fox, and Weaver, 1990; Kunjufu, 1984).

Researchers who have investigated the role of self-esteem and the African-American male report that there is a connection between low self-esteem and the barriers that place the Black male at-risk (Robinson and Ward, 1995; White-Hood, 1994; Taylor, 1993; Biggs, 1992; Thompson, 1992). Taylor (1993), Thompson (1992), and Kunjufu (1984), acknowledged that African-American males often experienced low self-esteem because they could not visually or mentally accept basic concepts of the traditional American Dream as described by our society.

Research has shown that self-esteem can directly alter the academic achievement of at-risk African-American male students (Wells, 1992; White-Hood, 1994; Kunjufu, 1984; Gill, 1992). Standardized test scores indicate that African-American students achieve higher grades with the support of heightened self-esteem. Research which supports the relationship between academic achievement and self-esteem is supported by the work of Wells (1992), and Gill (1992).

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS OF SELF-ESTEEM

Positive Indicators

1. Gives others directives or commands
2. Uses appropriate voice pitch for situation

3. Clearly expresses views
4. During social activities, sits with others
5. Within group works cooperatively
6. Demonstrates eye contact when speaking or being spoken to (faces others)
7. During conversation - maintains eye contact
8. Initiates socialization process (i.e. friendly)
9. Maintains appropriate body space between self and others
10. Speaks fluently with minimal hesitation in speech

Negative Indicators

1. Practices teasing, name-calling, or gossiping
2. Exemplifies gestures that are dramatic or out of context
3. Participates in inappropriate touching or avoids physical contact
4. Provides excuses for failures
5. Monitors others regularly
6. Is pompous about achievements, skills, appearance
7. Actuates negative self-talk; self-depreciation
8. Articulates dogmatically, too loudly, or abruptly
9. Fails to share views or opinions, especially when asked
10. Assumes a submissive position (Savin-Williams & Demo, 1993).

Two important sources of social support that significantly contribute to the adolescent's self-esteem are his relationship with his parents and his relationship with his peers. Coopersmith (1967, p.25) conducted an extensive investigation of parent-child relationships and self-esteem. Mothers and boys were interviewed about their relationship

and completed other assessments. Findings reveal the following parental characteristics were associated with boys' high self-esteem:

- Expression of affection
- Regard for the boy's welfare and problem
- Peace in the home
- Cooperation with family affairs
- Availability to provide appropriate assistance when needed
- Providing clear and fair rules
- Respecting the rules
- Providing mental, social, and emotional space with well-defined limits

While these factors are correlational, researchers contend that they do not cause heightened self-esteem, but rather acknowledge that these attributes are only major contributions to its positive effect.

In like manner, peer relationships are equally important variables to the development and enhancement of adolescent males' self-esteem.

Academic Achievement

A plethora of research addresses the educational experience of African-American students. (Datnow, A., Cooper, R., 1997) The school is one of the primary institutions where young people transmit culture, assimilate experiences and foster learning. (McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter, 1998). As school boards continue to address the area of student achievement, many are also beginning to address the gap that exists between Black and White students and their academic achievement. Data from the National Association of Education Progress (NAEP) reflect that between 1970 and 1990

the gap was narrowed. Yet, the research of the 1990s shows that progress has since slowed down significantly. More specifically the U.S. Education Department's "Condition of Education 1997" reflects a noted gap between African-American students and White students in NAEP tests of reading, math, writing, and science for all age groups in 1994 (Ashford, 1997).

Finding ways to close the gap is one of the largest challenges facing the institution of education. Michael Nettles, executive director of the United Negro College Fund's Frederick Patterson Research Institute examined this issue. The findings indicated that Blacks were more likely to be poor, have less educated parents, have higher dropout rates, attend inner-city schools with inadequately prepared teachers whose absenteeism is high.

Many school districts are taking serious steps to narrow the Black/White academic achievement gap. Many agree that while poverty may indirectly contribute to lower academic achievement rates of Black students, the way the educational system responds to them is also a factor. For example, many educators might have lower educational expectations of the African-American student because of his/her background. As such Blacks are over represented in the areas of special education and disciplinary actions but are underrepresented in advanced placement and accelerated courses (Ashford, 1997).

According to Jason W. Osborne of the State University of New York at Buffalo, African-American boys, compared to African-American girls, Whites, or Hispanics, express minimal school satisfaction where success or failure matters. Data for this conclusion is based on the ongoing National Education Longitudinal Study which has been following approximately twenty-five thousand students since eighth grade, beginning in 1988. The students' academic achievement level, grades, and level of overall self-esteem

were evaluated in grades eight, ten, and twelve. To determine the students' level of academic satisfaction or dissatisfaction, correlations between self-esteem and achievement scores and self-esteem and grades were measured. Improved or diminished self esteem correlated with grades and achievement scores suggested stronger academic identification. High self-esteem or self-esteem that remained the same while grades and achievement scores fell was indicative of academic disidentification.

Results from this study indicated that for African-American boys the correlations declined drastically. Osborne further acknowledged in this study that only African-American boys' correlation showed such a dramatic decrease over time. Little evidence supported the idea that African-American girls were affected similarly. Less evidence supported the idea that persons from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, such as Hispanics would disidentify with academics. Identifying reasons for these results could provide a basis for improving identification of students in general, and African-American adolescent males in particular (Schroeder, 1998).

To evaluate the basic components between students who achieve and those who do not, researchers Grief, Hrabowski, Greeman, and Maton (1998) share findings of academically successful African-American adolescent males. Since highly limited research is available on African-American fathers (who have high achieving sons), these authors sought to illustrate findings from a study of twenty-nine fathers of academically successful African-American males. Strong parenting practices were observed among the fathers but their most notable common trait was that of a strong identity as a Black male and the support they received from the larger society in raising their sons.

Racial Identification

Racial identification can be defined as the developing stages by which an individual internalizes his race with positive regard. It is based on the quality of one's racial level of awareness and seeks to find identity solutions during the life span. It is a developmental process for both Blacks and Whites, though the manner that it is expressed differs per race as a result of different racial experiences within the United States (Helms). Evaluating one's thinking patterns and reference group is part of the process of racial identification. According to Helms, theories on racial identification first appeared in the counseling psychology literature during the early 1970s. Helms states that racial identification is one of many continuing responses to the Civil Rights Movement of that era. During that time, she writes, practioners' aims were to help provide a foundation for racially sensitive issues that would also influence the therapeutic process.

Most theorists attempted to identify the direction of healthy Black identity development and argued that 'overidentification' with the White culture or assimilating identities was psychologically unhealthy. Naim Akbar (1985) further ascertained that assimilating identities presented psychologically unhealthy resolutions regarding identity issues which resulted from an apparent need to survive in a racist culture. Akbar's racial identity concept conflicts with the once popular "melting pot" philosophy of healthy development which this society embraced for most racial/ethnic groups. As such, retired college president Kenneth Cole states that emphasis should continue to be placed on the importance of the "salad bowl" concept which lends itself to the strength of each race's differences (Cole, 1996).

Racial (Black) identity addresses the concept of Nigrescence. Nigrescence is the process of “Becoming Black.” It represents a period of transformation oftentimes as isolated events such as that of Nat Turner 1831, or a Black social movement such as the Harlem Renaissance of the twenties, or the Black Power Movement of the 1960s and 1970s (Parham and Helms, 1990). This process evaluates and reevaluates one’s bi-cultural nature and moves towards internalizing a positive African-American identity.

Review of Related Literature

Education

Within the United States, educational attainment can oftentimes lead to upward mobility and generally increase one's chances of success (Gorden, 1995; Biggs, 1992; Kunjufu, 1986). Through education one can move from poverty to abundant living (Perry, 1993). Education has been a chosen method of upward mobility for the poor (Ford, 1993). In America the poor population is largely made up of African-Americans. African-Americans continue to struggle to provide educational opportunities for their children; however, many African-American males are faced with repeated failure in meeting educational goals which begins a cycle of destroyed ambition and dreams (Steward, 1992; Irvine, 1990; Kunjufu, 1986). According to Gordon (1995), many African-American males leave high school without having gained marketable communication such as reading and writing skills. Furthermore, it is estimated that over forty percent of African-American males are functionally illiterate and twenty-five percent are being raised by high school dropouts (Gorden, 1995; Lemelle, 1995). These factors prevent the escape from the poverty.

In Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys, Kunjufu (1986) wrote that if young Black males do not receive the validation, reinforcement, and nurturing they need in the primary grades, they will grow into adults who are educationally, socially, and politically unable to make meaningful contributions to society. It is during the primary grades that many young males receive labels such as "slow learner" or "hyperactive" which begins an educational path towards special education. Some theorists think that whether conscious or unconscious, this is an example of how African-American males move away from the education mainstream (Grant, 1992; Hillard, 1992; Allen-Meanes, 1990).

Even though African-American students comprise approximately seventeen percent of all school age students they make-up forty-one percent of all special education placement. Of the total Black population, males comprise eighty-five percent while Black females comprise the other fifteen percent (Biggs, 1992). Many persons view placement into the Special Education Program as a negative school event. This placement can be destructive to one's self-concept as many Black males begin to view themselves as educationally inferior. This point of view further leads to lack of achievement, inadequate motivation, a tendency to drop out of school, and school failure (Joseph, 1996).

As a result of the educational placement of Black students, especially with regards to the placement of males in ability grouping, homogenous separation is likely to occur. This type of grouping can lead to separation of students quite frequently between the races and also among social classes. Slavin (1995) states that this type of separation promotes an inferior education for African-American males.

Ogbu (1978) has examined the academic performance of African-American adolescents and has indicated that African-American children and their parents could not

see the relevance of school. His contention is that they (African-American adolescent students) gave up because they could not see how it had helped anyone in their environment. Children respond more positively to school if they can see how it has helped anyone in their environment be more successful (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986). Ogbu (1987) further contends that if persons concerned about the education of minority students can conclude what successful Black (and Hispanic) students have in common, then intervention can be used to assist those who are not succeeding. Because of school failure, Ogbu (1978) believes that African-American youth who are unsuccessful in school perceive this to be a rejection of the African-American experience and culture. African-American males encounter problematic experiences regarding academic failure as early as elementary school (Hubbard, 1996; Joseph, 1996; Kunjufu, 1986; Smith, Chum, & Wells, 1987).

The 1993 United States Bureau of the Census reported that fifteen percent of African-American youths between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four were high school dropouts, compared to twenty-four percent in 1980. The Urban League (1982) suggests that African-American males usually drop out due to problems associated with family income, academic difficulties, and/or disciplinary problems. According to this study, nearly one-third of families whose incomes fell below \$6,000 annually had at least one child suspended from school. African-American families with incomes above \$20,000 annually also had at least one child suspended from school. Students' alienation and hostility, in addition to a lack of proper communication between school and home, cause a continual downward spiral of mistrust and maladaptive behavior (Gordon, 1995).

Unemployment

Many researchers use the term "underclass" to describe a group of African-American poor who represent a persistent and precarious form of poverty. The new underclass is made up of several populations whose foundations stem from their employment status. This group of people include criminals, participants in the underground economic network, the habitual unemployed, and those whose homes are headed by persons who have been poor for an extended period of time (Jarrett, 1995). In short, this underclass grouping is affected mostly by the income status of each person. African-American males represent a disproportionate percentage of unemployment. Therefore, they chose alternative activities to compensate for their employment and income status (Larson, 1988).

High unemployment is often associated with poor education and inferior training. Wicker (1996) suggests that Black males have not done well in the work place due to issues involving education, training, and skill levels. Unemployment directly affects one's socio-economic status and level of poverty.

Poverty

As recently as 1995, almost half (forty-five percent) of all African-American children were born at, or beneath, the poverty line (Gates and West, 1996). One's poverty level is referred to as a minimum level below that which is classified as living in a state of deficiency, according to Webster's Riverside Dictionary (1994). Gates and West (1996) contend that if these are the best of times for Middle Class African-Americans, it is also the worst of times for the other half of the race. Gates and West indicated that at least

one-third of the Black community is worse off than they were when Martin Luther King was killed in 1968.

W.E.B. DuBois (1903) advocated that breaking the cycle of poverty must be implemented through educational endeavors. He suggested the use of the "Talented Tenth." The "Talented Tenth" were the socially conscious, educated members of the African-American society. Their primary goal was to uplift other African-Americans.

Almost one-third of African-Americans live below the poverty level. A family of four is in a state of poverty when their income level is less than \$14,000. Hill (1994) described poverty as a norm that is stable in the Black community. A Black male's chance of living in poverty increases as he becomes involved in the criminal justice system.

Because poverty is both a cause and effect of single parent families (Majors and Billson, 1992), this factor is a leading cause of dysfunctional families. Repeated exposure to poverty places children at a great disadvantage. The absence of fathers within the home can place great stress on this environment financially. Also, of equal importance is the inability of children to associate father/child relationships and observe appropriate "father" role modeling. Such an absence can lead to poor or inappropriate social skills, negative behavior, low/underachievement in school, and poor self control (Gadsden, 1994). Webster (1995) defines poverty as the state of being poor, lacking, or a deficiency.

Family Structure

The family is the most important socialization unit known to humanity. It is also the most influential to human behavior (Barker and Hill, 1996). It has a profound effect upon the development of the child including his values, belief system, personality, attitudes, and thought processes (Richardson, 1992; Franklin, 1992). The family is the

oldest institution for teaching survival skills and other adaptations necessary for its perseverance (Barker and Hill, 1996).

For centuries African-Americans have managed to survive many shortcomings and obstacles from constant family disruptions. In spite of a legacy of mental, physical, social, and economic degradation, African-Americans have proven to be a race of overcomers with a family network that has maximized coping strategies for succeeding against the odds. With the assistance of its extended family unit, the African-American family has instinctively created a way to survive in an otherwise detrimental situation (Greene, 1997).

The African-American extended family can be traced back to one of many African cultures. That is, in many African cultures, newly married couples continue to live with their family and share household responsibilities and basic tasks. An extended family arrangement helps African-American families cope with adverse social circumstances and financial bleakness (McAdoo, 1993; McLoyd and Wilson, 1990). Grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and siblings live together to provide support. Research by McAdoo (1993) has found that this type of social arrangement helps to reduce stress from poverty by providing emotional and economic support, sharing of income, and surrogate parenting. The presence of grandmothers among young African-American families adolescents, especially those who are teenage parents, has proven to be a beneficial support system (Steven, 1984).

For many families, basic traditions have been the foundation that has held them together and allowed them to function and survive (Barker and Hill, 1996). The at-risk African-American male family structure is noticeably different from traditional family

structures because of the following ambient factors: a large number of female-headed households, large poverty rates, more extended family members living under one roof, and the large number of fathers who are absent from the home in other family settings (Staples, 1987; Johnson, 1993).

Statistical data supports the following findings of the African-American family structure:

- * At least twenty-five percent of all African -American males fail to graduate from high school (Richardson, 1992; Stewart, 1992)
- * High school dropouts raise twenty-five percent of African -American children (Lemelle, 1995)
- * Half (fifty percent) of all African- American mothers live in a state of poverty; these same females also have the responsibility of raising fifty percent of all African-American males (Statistical Abstract, 1993).
- * One-third of all African -American males are born to unwed parents and raised in poverty (Statistical Abstract, 1993).

There exists a high percentage of single-parent African-American families of which many are from low-income categories. Coping in the family structure can be difficult.

This can have a negative effect upon the child/adolescent (McAdoo, 1993).

Paradoxically, more than half of all African -American children, who are younger than the age of six, live in households with single- parents/guardians (Smith and Joe, 1994) which is partly due to the fact that many African -American men cannot maintain self-sufficiency and financial stability enough to contribute to the home. Many African-American males

leave the home environment for this reason, thus allowing females to head the household (Smith and Joe, 1994; Aubry, 1995; Sullivan, 1989).

Researchers Zimmerman, Salem, and Maton (1995) have discovered that a father's absence from home coexists with drug and alcohol use, lower self-esteem, tobacco consumption, crime and criminal behavior, exiting the school environment without having earned a high school diploma. Consequently, when the father is away from the home, many mothers will authorize their male sons to become the "man of the house" (Kunjufu, 1986). This new title for the young adolescent male is often the beginning of many struggles to come as the child seeks to please the parent and maintain his success identity at school.

Homes without fathers, likewise, affect many other issues such as criminal activities within the African-American community (Boone, 1991; Sampson, 1987). Sampson expanded this idea as he contended that there is a direct relationship between unemployment and disruptive African-American families, criminal behavior, and dysfunctional families. Research repeatedly shows that a child born to a stable home environment with mature, educated, working, and married parents, even if the child is receiving assistance from the federal government, has a greater chance of academic success than one who lacks support within a family structure (Revising Welfare, 1996). Even support from the extended family gives the child a chance for academic success.

Crime and Antisocial Behavior

The mass media constantly reminds its public that crime and violence is out of control. Local television commercials frequently advise, "Please, Stop the Violence." Routine conversations both show and tell that the rage of crime and violence is

phenomenal for every race, every social class, and every culture. Yet, the statistics reflect that African-American males make up the majority of persons who are surviving within the judicial system.

Aggression and maladaptive behaviors have been cited as primary reasons dysfunctional families exist (Boone, 1991). Failure to identify appropriate roles within the family structure (Pomerantz, 1978), limited job/career opportunities, and racism, all denote obstacles to successful experiences for the African-American male.

The following statistics cite how the African-American male stands in relation to the criminal justice system:

Homicide is the leading cause of death for Black males (Statistical Abstract, 1993; Megget, 1994). Forty percent of prisoners on death row are Black males (Mauer, 1994; Scales, 1992). The homicide rate of Black males is 125.2 per 100,000 compared to 14.2 for White males (Statistical Abstract, 1993). Black males comprise fifty percent of the prison population, but only six percent of the race. The statistics suggest that these conditions are likewise, oppressive and depressive. Their realities represent a state of stress and despair for themselves, their families, and others who would like to feel hopeful in the midst of it all (Allen-Mearers and Burman, 1995).

Recently, a town hall meeting was held in Washington, D.C. to address the growing number of routine stops and arrests made to African-American males, even though many were unwarranted. As a result of the growing occurrence here, the United States Congress has set up a special task force to investigate patterns of unfair practices of arrests. African-American males have been arrested more often for committing crimes than males of other races (Maurer, 1994; Allen-Mearers and Burman, 1995; Poussaint, 1983).

The U.S. Criminal Justice system prosecutes Black males at a much higher rate than they do White males of the same stature (Marble, 1995; Myers, and Sabol, 1987). Some law enforcement officers promote the widespread use of police brutality, harassment, false arrests, and the use of excessive force (Feagin, 1986). With so many Black males incarcerated, there are fewer Black males enrolled in post secondary institutions. Williams and McShane (1990) also acknowledged that African-American males received longer sentences for serious crimes than White males who have committed the same crime.

The African-American male's high involvement with the criminal justice system concerns many African-Americans to the point of frustration (Meggett, 1994; Staples, 1990). More than any other race, the Black community feels the absence of the African-American males (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1993). Poverty and unemployment were two specific attributes to the high crime rate among the African-American male (Sullivan, 1989; Duster, 1987). Aubry (1986) connected a direct correlation between unemployment and criminal activity. For many Black males, criminal activity replaced unemployment and the need to secure legitimate jobs. Hill (1994) noted that estimates reveal that approximately twenty-five percent of the income of Black males is gained through crime.

Suicide Trends

For many years there has been a myth in the African-American community that Blacks do not commit suicide as do other ethnic groups, especially those who are of European descent. This myth is based on one of many documents that document lower suicide rates among African-Americans from a historical perspective. The U.S. Center

for Disease Control (1994) reported that in 1980 eighty-four African-American males between the ages of fifteen and nineteen killed themselves nationally, a rate of 5.6 per 100,000. That number tripled by 1994 as two-hundred thirty suicides were recorded which averaged 16.6 lives per 100,000. Alex Crosby, who documents the national trend for the Center for Disease Control's Division of Violence Prevention, states that if these rates keep growing, Black males' suicide rates will get extremely close to that of Whites in the next few years. In 1994, White males who were aged fifteen to nineteen, committed suicide at a rate of 18.7 per 100,000. Between 1980 and 1993 suicide rates among Black males between fifteen and twenty-four increased sixty-three percent (63%). Moreover, there were 536 suicides in 1993 compared to 346 suicides in 1980 within this same age group, the study showed.

The U.S. Department of Commerce (1993) similarly reported that traditionally Black male suicide rates have been lower than that of White male suicide rates. African-American suicide rates have grown by fifty percent within the past two decades (Greenberg and Schnider, 1992). As a result, suicide is now the third leading cause of death among African-American males who are between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four, after homicides and accidents (CDC, 1994). Harvard Medical School Psychiatrist, Alvin Pouissant (1995), revealed that while they (Black males) will not admit that they want to die, they will express that it does not matter what happens to them either way. This, according to Dr. Pouissant, is an indication that they do not value life.

David Clark, an epidemiologist who studied suicide trends, acknowledged that there is limited information why more African-American males are now increasing in numbers the frequency of suicide deaths. Clark questioned 'what is it that used to protect

African-American males from high suicide rates?’ Clark also stated that this changing trend causes one to question to ‘what degree is growing up as an African-American and male in the United States a changing phenomenon?’ Spaight and Simpson (1986) have analyzed that the increased suicide rate can be attributed to several factors ranging from family affairs to racism to personal foes.

Many contend that there must be a returned emphasis to the church in the African-American community. Others suggest that anger, feelings of hopelessness, social alienation, limited opportunities for upward mobility, emotional pain, and a lack of family support all significantly have an impact on the increased suicide rates of African-American males (Gibbs and Hines, 1989).

School Climate

School climate has been defined as an inclusive system primarily consisting of culture, physical plan, social relationships, individual behavior, and organizational structure (Kowalski and Reitzug, 1993). Research has shown that a positive school climate is one where teachers can work and students can learn effectively (Curren, 1983). Keefe and Howard (1997), regarding education, maintain that effective education requires an environment that is conducive to learning.

Principals are primarily responsible for instituting a positive school climate in which leadership, encouragement, and support are established and maintained to advance an environment that is conducive to learning (Dietrich and Bailey, 1996). Yet, Goodlad (1984) wrote most educational institutions (schools) do not plan for the nurturance of students. He further observed that teachers tended to focus on compliance, as well as structure, within the school environment. Thus, students may think that nurturing is not

meaningful since there is an absence of it. However, a nurturing learning atmosphere allows and provides for the development of cognitive, creative, and problem solving skills (McNeal, 1993). Teachers need an environment where learning can take place, but many researchers indicate that students work best and achieve more in their classrooms if they are respected and accepted by their teachers and peers (Lewis, Schaps, and Watson, 1996; Kaplan and Evans, 1997; Dietrich and Bailey, 1996).

Motivation

Motivating African-American males toward excellence in education is crucial (Thompson, 1992). Thompson contended that crucial statistical data regarding African-American juveniles would reflect lower involvement in the judicial system. Poor grades, behavior problems, low academic standards, and high dropout rates among African-American males are all interrelated to problems of motivation (Joseph, 1996; Baldwin and Johnson, 1996; Asante, 1995; Biggs, 1992). Motivation means expressing a desire for action. It entails working hard, being persistent, and staying focused until a final goal is reached (Johns, 1983). Effort, persistence, and direction are the three specific areas of motivation as described by Johns. At the same time, other theorists who write on motivational aspects include Maslow's Hierarchy of Need Theory, Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, and Alderfer's Existence Relatedness Growth Theory (Lunenbergs and Ornstein, 1996). McClelland (1971) contended that the need for achievement and success varied between cultures and motivation focused on personal efforts that led the way to the accumulation of rewards respectively.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs identified five levels which represent the order of significance. Their order of importance is as follows: physiological, safety, social, esteem,

and self-actualization (Lunenberg and Ornstein, 1996). Frederick Herzberg constructed and modified Maslow's work to include his Motivation-Hygiene Theory which sought to resolve factors that caused motivation rather than looking for needs energized with the individual (Lunenberg and Ornstein, 1996). Thus, Clayton Alderfer's Existence Relatedness Growth Theory states that people do have needs and those needs can be classified into higher and lower order needs (Lunenberg and Ornstein, 1996).

Others have expressed different points of view and levels of motivation, especially as it relates to African-American males. Among those theorists are Wardle (1991) and Hale-Benson (1986). Their research attempted to explain why African-American males are not motivated towards success in school. Wardle's focal point was centered around Black males' high energy level and aggressiveness, indicating that activities should be structured around these characteristics. Hale-Benson focused on learning styles and cultural differences. He has suggested strategies to infuse the African-American culture into the curriculum. Regarding motivation, Brophy (1987) is a supporter of intrinsic incentive. Through this technique, students can choose activities that they are interested in and enjoy accordingly. He has theorized that the African-American male can be motivated by permitting him to complete education tasks that he selects. Hence, the completion of the assignment will infuse in the Black male a sense of accomplishment (Garibaldi, 1992; Gill, 1992; Brophy, 1987).

Summary

This chapter reviewed various factors that impact the life of the at-risk African-American adolescent male and the period of adolescent development. Careful thought and consideration addressed self-concept, academic achievement and racial identification. The

literature review substantiates the need to assist adolescent and African-American males with proper guidance and growth activities. Social barriers that hinder their success were also reviewed. Chapter three identifies methodological procedures for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

The Descriptive Method was used in this study to obtain the data needed to test the two hypotheses and complete the research study. According to Gay (1996), Descriptive Method is useful in researching various educational problems and reports the way things are. The descriptive researcher reports what already exists through the form of a questionnaire survey, interviews, or observation. Quantitative methodology more clearly explain students' views and opinions concerning self-concept and racial identification. Accordingly, quantitative methods were used to investigate both instructional and non-instructional interactions.

Site/Setting

Morehouse College, an inner-city four year college, which coordinates secondary educational and social programs for at-risk adolescents, was the specific site for this study. The site was chosen based on the willingness of its staff to allow the research to be conducted there. The site for this investigation was located in Atlanta, Georgia, an urban city which is in the southeastern region of the United States. It is sometimes described as an international city with a growing population that exceeds two million. Many people reference this city as rich in African-American culture while others remark of it as a headquarters for many businesses locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. This geographic area has many educational institutions including public,

private, and parochial schools. It additionally has a vast number of colleges, universities, technical schools, and innovative institutions – all designed to meet the growing needs of its potential students. The setting was the Upward Bound program; it was selected because of its accessibility to the principle researcher.

Hypothesis

1. There was no statistical significant difference in the relationship between students' self-concepts and their academic performance as determined by the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale and students' grade point averages.

Research has suggested that students who demonstrate positive self-concepts and high esteem seemingly feel better about school tasks and other challenges (Kimbrow, 1996). According to research, students appear to have a more optimistic view of their purpose and current state of being. Some, however, failed to accept the schooling process as a needed venture. As a result, the latter displayed lower self-concepts and academic achievement rates (Ogbu, 1994). Hence it is therefore inferred that a positive relationship exists between the variables self-concept and academic achievement.

2. There was no statistical significant difference in the relationship between students' racial identification and their level of academic achievement as determined by the Adolescent Racial Identification Questionnaire, students' grade point averages, and the "academic self-score" of the TSCS. This hypothesis was conceived after reviewing literature on racial identification. Research revealed that many African-Americans are routinely cognizant of

race, culture, and ethnicity. For this population maintaining a state of social/racial consciousness has provided a foundation for maintaining mental health. Here affirming one's cultural identity is sometimes attributed to a person's success. As mentioned in chapter two parent/adults commonly demonstrate emotional support for children facing challenges and coping with racial awareness by simply emphasizing "You're just as good as the next person Black or White." As such it was hypothesized that students who expressed strong racial identification would also demonstrate academic achievement.

Subject Pool

The subject pool for this study will consist of at-risk African-American adolescent male students who are enrolled in one of the student support programs for adolescents. Participants will be between the ages of thirteen and seventeen, currently enrolled in a local school, and able to read the survey and questionnaire independently. These subjects will be used in this investigation because they represent basic characteristics of the "at-risk adolescent African-American males" described in chapter two. These males must also be available and willing to participate in this study as deemed so by completing and returning each individual form.

Sample

The sample consisted of adolescent at-risk African -American males randomly chosen from the subject pool. There were approximately eighty students enrolled in the Upward Bound Program of which forty (fifty percent) were randomly selected. To qualify for participation in the Upward Bound Program students must meet one of the following

guidelines: 1.) potential first generation college student 2.) family economic status 3.) cultural disadvantage 4.) academic - remediation. This population was selected because they also met the profile of many at-risk African-American males described in this study. Research on at-risk African-American adolescent males identified many as successful; yet they face many problematic situations. Some educators also have described them as scholars and underachievers. Students in this sample group represented a very relevant mixture of students across the social strata.

Instrumentation

The instruments to be used in this study were: 1) The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale and 2.) The Adolescent Racial Identification Questionnaire. The Adolescent Racial Identification Questionnaire also identified demographics that were completed by each participant. These two surveys were completed within forty minutes.

The first instrument used was the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS). This scale was a survey, designed and used as a multidimensional self-concept assessment instrument. It is useful for ages seven to ninety. Self-concept defined here emphasized how the person perceived himself. Authors of the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, W.H. Fitts and W.L. Warren, have acknowledged that the two constructs of self-concept and self-esteem continue to be more and more correlated throughout the years. Respondents to the TSCS rated each item on a five point scale ranging from *always false* to *always true*.

The internal consistency reliability was estimated by calculating Cronbach's alpha. The internal consistency scores range from .73 to .95 (median .80) for the Adult Form. A

construct validity coefficient of .75 measured between the widely used Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory and the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale total scores.

The same sample group completed an Adolescent Racial Identification Questionnaire. It listed ten questions that evaluated one's level of racial identification. Because there was not an available instrument for adolescents on racial identification and upon the recommendation of the department chairman, the face value of the Racial Identification Questionnaire was designed by the principle researcher and the late sociologist Wilbur Watson. The instrument was then field-tested on at-risk African-American adolescent students. Gay (1996) has emphasized that this procedure allows for suggested improvements through modifications and discussion of deficiencies.

Procedures Three study periods was used for this research. They included the pre-research period, the research period, and the post research period. The following procedural steps guided the study periods.

Pre-research Period

Procedure 1: The principle researcher contacted the designated officials responsible for intake and orientation of the Upward Bound Program of the participating school. The process included a.) contacting the school officials by phone to set up an appointment and visiting them to discuss research plans; b.) submitting written requests to school officials requesting permission to conduct the study at the chosen school site; and c.) obtaining a written response (official agreement) to contact the research study from the school administrator.

Procedure 2: The researcher secured a date, place, and time to administer the instrument at the chosen site. This procedure included contacting the designated school

officials in charge of intake and orientation both by phone and through personal visits, establishing dates, times, and facilities to be used for the administration of the survey.

Research Period

Procedure 3: The researcher attended the setting, as agreed upon, with copies of The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, The Adolescent Racial Identification Questionnaire, and pencils for each participant in this study.

Procedure 4: The researcher distributed an instrument and pencil to each potential respondent.

Procedure 5: The researcher explained the purpose of the study to the potential survey respondents.

Procedure 6: The researcher answered general questions regarding the survey.

Procedure 7: All survey forms were individually collected from respondents as they were completed.

Post-Research Period

Procedure 8: All tests were collected by the researcher. The study was then considered terminated.

Data Collection

The researcher collected all data for this investigation. African-American adolescent males, who were enrolled in the Upward Bound Program and who chose to participate in this research study, were surveyed. The sample was selected from the general population. Scoring was systematically completed in an organized manner which facilitated analysis.

Data Analysis

The data from this investigation was analyzed using Analysis of Variance for the randomly chosen sample group. The researcher used this statistical analysis as an index to represent the group of respondents. This form of calculation is an acceptable statistical method used to organize research data for computation.

Human Subjects Contract

All students completed a human subjects contract provided by the principle researcher. Permission to solicit subjects' responses was granted by the appropriate persons.

Summary

Chapter three outlined procedural guidelines for conducting this research. This chapter included descriptive research, demographic information, sample group, instrumentation, data collection, and other strategies for potential validation of this investigation. Efforts were made to describe exactly what was be done through ethical standards governing this research.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

This chapter addresses the analysis of raw data, provides interpretative data, and presents data summaries as it relates to this study. Two hypotheses were analyzed using the ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) statistical tool. This tool was selected because of its usefulness when using more than two variables in a study. Tables are used throughout this chapter to clearly present relevant information regarding population profiles and findings considered unique to the population. The population for this study was comprised of forty (40) African-American males from public school settings and who were also considered students at-risk.

Demographic Profile

Demographic Profiles are used to provide assistance in helping the reader to understand specific features of the population studied. This data helps the reader to 1.) become more knowledgeable of what has transpired and 2.) formulate some conclusions in reference to the study and its population. Table 1 outlines the age levels of subjects in this study.

Table 1
RESPONDENTS' AGES

Age	Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
13	1	5	12.5	12.5
14	2	9	22.5	35.0
15	3	8	20.0	55.0
16	4	7	17.5	72.5
17	5	8	20.0	92.5
18	6	3	7.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	

The information in Table 1 reveals that the population spread by age shows average representation by age groups. The exception is the eighteen (18) year age group where only three (3) students are represented. One could conclude that these students have either failed a grade previously, started school late, or have birthdays late in the year. In like manner, it could also be assumed that by the time a student reaches the age of eighteen, he feels independent of support programs such as Upward Bound and chooses not to participate.

Information on students' grade levels showed that most of the students were in the ninth and tenth grades, and eleventh graders were almost equal to those subjects in terms of participants. Both eighth graders, identified by five respondents, and twelfth graders, identified by three respondents had small representation. Hence, this makes the study size ideal because the largest grouping falls in the middle of the population. Hence, both ends of the population are too small to impact significantly impact the major finding.

Table 2
POPULATION BY GRADE

Grade	Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
8	1	5	12.5	12.5
9	2	12	30.0	42.5
10	3	11	27.5	70.0
11	4	9	22.5	92.5
12	5	3	7.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	

Table 2 reflects that thirty-two or eighty percent of the distribution are almost evenly distributed. This is significant because it represents a more homogeneous grouping. Again this is important because most of the respondents are approximately at the same (or similar) adolescent stage where they are clearly defining themselves and establishing peer networks.

While many at-risk African-American males fit the norm as it relates to academic achievement and school motivation, table 3 yields an interesting finding.

Table 3
REPEATED A GRADE

Response	Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
Yes	1	7	17.5	17.5
No	2	33	82.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	

Less than eighteen percent of this population has repeated a grade while in school. This is a good finding because many studies report that African-American males are doing poorly in school and have been retained one or more times. For some, underachievement has become the norm, but for others passing from one grade to the next is a priority. As

such the population's interest in education is not diminished by the at-risk label. One should also be advised that simply passing is not an indication that these or any other students value or devalue educational attainment. This survey result simply denotes that the sample group here has managed to move forward.

For many, the home environment is the foundation where behavior is modeled, values are developed, and attitudinal traits are implemented. The influence of home oftentimes is carried over to the school and community. Parental expectations can help to influence desired behavior. Table 4 gives a profile of the student population according to guardianship.

Table 4
RESPONDENTS' GUARDIANSHIP

Guardian	Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
Both Parents	1	19	47.5	47.5
Father	2	4	10.0	57.5
Mother	3	14	35.0	92.5
Other	4	3	7.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	

The illustration in Table 4 gives rise to forty-eight percent of the respondents living with both parents. Students who live with father only make up ten percent of the respondents, thirty-five percent live with mother only and eight percent of the respondents live with someone other than a parent(s). The influence of both parents and mother (only) accounts for eighty-three percent of the students' home environments.

According to this table, it is clear that homes, with parents present, are still a viable part of the African-American community. A large percentage of students live in single parent families usually where only the mother is present. This holds true for African-

American males. Students living with father only or other account for a small number of the population. It is the opinion of this researcher that more men should assume leadership roles among single-parent families. Though women often provide stable home environments for children, even a surrogate male parent can greatly enhance the nurturance needed for at-risk African-American males. Notwithstanding the positive impact of grandparents and other members of one's extended family, adult males are needed to assist young males grow and develop. Assuming the role and character of significant other(s) is one that is positive, many persons can influence the path of a student.

The educational level of attainment of mother and father can also affect how students perceive themselves and their parents. Table 5 provides documentation of the highest educational attainment of the respondents' parents.

Table 5

PARENTS' EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF COMPLETION

Level of Education	Mother			
	Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
High School	1	8	20.0	20.0
Some College	2	15	37.5	57.5
Graduate	3	15	37.5	95.0
Masters Degree	4	2	5.0	100.0
Total		40	100.0	

Level of Education	Father			
	Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
High School	1	12	30.0	30.0
Some College	2	18	45.0	75.0
Graduate	3	9	22.5	97.5
Masters Degree	4	1	2.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	

Table 5 yielded a unique finding in that it indicates that more fathers (as opposed to mothers) have attended college, but more mothers have actually graduated. Such a finding could also be indicative of the fact that many more women graduate from college in today's society. It is therefore inferred that mothers influence students more educationally simply, because they have in some way benefited from the educational experience through completion of higher levels, at a large rate.

Table 6 addresses by whom the student has been influenced most educationally – parent, teacher, or other.

Table 6
MOST INFLUENTIAL ON RESPONDENTS' EDUCATION

Person	Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
Parent	1	25	62.5	62.5
Teacher	2	7	17.5	80.0
Other	3	8	20.0	100.0
Total		40	100.0	

As mentioned earlier, the parental expectation and influence on a student is indeed important. This table additionally indicates that parental influence has been most persuasive among these respondents. What could be disturbing to some persons is that a teacher's influence to this peer group was tabulated as least influential. They expressed having been influenced by some other person more. Yet, it is likewise worth noting that the deciding factor between these two factors is too small to form any valid conclusions.

Extended factors such as negative peer pressure and symbols of success gained through dishonest means, can contribute to a student's outlook regarding education. Thus peer pressure does not have to be negative, it can also be used constructively.

Additionally, education can be used as a motivating factor to help students honestly earn symbols of success. Table 7 represents the participants' responses to whether they are ever educationally motivated by their peers.

Table 7

PEER MOTIVATION

Response	Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
Yes	1	31	77.5	77.5
No	2	9	22.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	

The literature review in this study cited the absence of peer reference groups among reasons for low achievement levels of African-American adolescent males. Contrary to some students, this sample group affirmed, by seventy-eight percent, that they are sometimes educationally as a result of peer interaction.

(See Appendix for Demographic Profile Questionnaire and Raw Data)

Profile Of Adolescent Racial Identification

The period of adolescent growth and development can be described as a period of change. It includes, according to Eric Erikson (1968), the establishment of new identities. Theorists who study Racial Identification refer to it as the psychological, cultural, social, and physical feature of one's racial group (Sanders-Thompson, 1992).

The principle researcher for this study sought to determine the degree to which African-American adolescent males express ties to the African-American community, its culture, norms, and some of its basic traditions. Table 8 illustrates what racial preference they acknowledge most. Simply put it answers the question "What is your race?"

Table 8
RACIAL PREFERENCE

Called	Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
African-American	1	21	52.5	52.5
Black	2	16	40.0	92.5
Other	3	3	7.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	

As evidenced by Table 8, most respondents preferred to be called African-American by over fifty percent. Forty percent indicate that they would rather be called Black and eight percent or three individuals selected other as their racial identity. Though all forty respondents appeared to be of a darker hue they had various ways of expressing their race. It is interesting to note that those students with the best grades all chose to be called African-American. Students whose grade point average were average to low chose Black as their racial identity. Though not asked to do so, the remaining three who selected other wrote that their preference was a.) "a man" b.) "Caribbean American" and c.) "the human race." Additionally, it is worth noting that educators conclude that choosing to be called African-American gives rise to one's acknowledgement of an ethnic and racial homeland.

In Table 9 multiple questions have been posed to the students and their responses were tabulated so that the finding reveals more about the population under study.

ADOLESCENT RACIAL IDENTIFICATION FACTORS

Table 9A

ETHNIC HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

Response	Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
Yes	1	37	92.5	92.5
No	2	3	7.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	

Table 9B

ACCEPTS RACE AS REASON TO CELEBRATE

Response	Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
Yes	1	32	80.0	80.0
No	2	8	20.0	100.0
Total		40	100.0	

Table 9C

VALUES RACIAL HERITAGE

Response	Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
Yes	1	34	85.0	85.0
No	2	6	15.0	100.0
Total		40	100.0	

Table 9D

ANCESTRY INFLUENCE

Response	Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
Yes	1	37	92.5	92.5
No	2	3	7.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	

Table 9E**EXPERIENCES RACIAL PRIDE**

Response	Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
Yes	1	33	82.5	82.5
No	2	7	17.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	

Table 9F**PEER PERCEPTION OF RACIAL IDENTITY**

Response	Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
Yes	1	27	67.5	67.5
No	2	13	32.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	

It can be seen that the population has a strong affiliation with their racial heritage and harbor minimum doubt of who they are. They are proud of their race, socialize with each other, and celebrate openly holidays related to their heritage. The small number of students who have opposite views should not be viewed as totally oppositional, but perhaps a contradiction to how the questions were received, interpreted and understood by the students.

Students who understood the questions responded without any reservation. This is also expressed in the students' responses to the question regarding the race of their close friends. See Table 10.

Table 10
RACIAL HERITAGE OF FRIENDS

Race	Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
African-American/Black	1	24	60.0	60.0
Both (Black/White)	2	14	35.0	95.0
Other	4	2	5.0	100.0
Total		40	100.0	

Respondents report that nearly all of their close friends are of the same ethnic background. One reservation about this question is the fact that this is a multiracial society. Limited socializing and contact with other racial groups can lead to isolation and a lack of sensitivity and appreciation of other cultures. As these youngsters get older, leave their community, and accept jobs in the larger community the adaptation factor may determine how well they continue to survive the at-risk factor.

To evaluate the adolescents' social interactions, they were questioned as to with whom do they socialize with most. Findings here provides a framework by which it can be determined a major preference as a socialization factor. See Table 11.

Table 11
RACIAL SOCIALIZATION

Race	Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
Black	1	26	65.0	65.0
White	2	3	7.5	72.5
Both	3	10	25.0	97.5
Other	4	1	2.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	

One can deduct from the findings in Table 11 that when it comes to socializing, some people simply feel more comfortable with those of his/her own heritage. But, this

fact does not prevent one from interacting with others from outside the racial heritage group nor does it imply such. Of importance is the fact that the students do have other racial groups within their environment and social contact is made as the situation presents itself. Regardless of how limited this contact is, the population knows and reacts appropriately when the time calls for proper socialization and interaction.

Racial identification and the role of the teacher is important. Students' perceptions of the teacher towards them sometimes, and oftentimes, is not the reality. Communication between the students and the teacher is critical in fostering understanding and appreciation of one's self. When students were asked if they think that their teachers respected them, their responses were very good. See Table 12.

Table 12
TEACHERS' LEVEL OF RESPECT

Factor	Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
Total	1	21	52.5	52.5
Average	2	16	40.0	92.5
Somewhat	3	2	5.0	97.5
None	4	1	2.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	

Again, almost a hundred percent of the students felt that the teachers respect them as African-Americans. Looking closer at this finding one can suspect that the school setting is predominantly African-American. Thus, strong heritage and pride is fostered and encouraged within.

Profile Of Students GPA, T-Score, A-Score

The following three tables (13, 14 & 15) give summary data of the population Grade Point Averages (GPA), T-Scores (self-concept score), and A-Scores (academic

score) as obtained from the administration of the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale. It must be pointed out here that when looking at this data, the at-risk nature of the population and classification of the students, are not atypical of the whole student body population. With this group of students, a grade point average above 2.0 is considered good performance. Likewise, on the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale any scores within the 40-60 range is considered normal and acceptable. Scores outside this range on both extremes, high and low, are call for serious concern and should raise questions about one's self-concept.

Looking at the data in Table 13 regarding the students' GPA a clearer observation of results gives the researcher a better understanding of the population for further analysis and interpretation (See Table 13).

Table 13

RESPONDENTS' GRADE POINT AVERAGE

Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
1.7	1	2.5	2.5
2.0	1	2.5	5.0
2.1	2	5.0	10.0
2.2	1	2.5	12.5
2.3	2	5.0	17.5
2.4	3	7.5	25.0
2.5	3	7.5	32.5
2.6	3	7.5	40.0
2.7	4	10.0	50.0
2.8	7	17.5	67.5
2.9	5	12.5	80.0
3.0	2	5.0	85.0
3.1	2	5.0	90.0
3.2	1	2.5	92.5
3.3	1	2.5	95.0
3.4	1	2.5	97.5
3.6	1	2.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	

Note: 4.0 – A
 3.0 – B
 2.0 – C
 1.0 – D
 Below 1.0 – F

Mean Score = 2.695

Highest GPA = 3.600

Lowest GPA = 1.700

Table 13A

RESPONDENTS' GRADE POINT AVERAGE SUMMARY

GPA	Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
0 – 1.9	1	1	2.5	2.5
2 – 2.9	2	31	77.5	80.0
3 – 3.9	3	8	20.0	100.0
Total		40	100.0	

Most of the respondents' grade point averages are of satisfactory status. All students have passing scores. Only one student was performing below satisfactory expectation. Eight of the students are performing amazingly higher than the expectation GPA range of 2.0 – 2.9.

Tennessee Self-Concept Scale Results

The respondents' self-concept score demonstrates how well they feel about themselves, family, friends, and others. It further reveals that respondents are quite normal in having a positive to average self-concept. Very few students show a problem in having a positive self-concept according to the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale used in this study.

Table 14**RESPONDENTS' SELF-CONCEPT T-SCORES**

T-SCORE	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
37	1	2.5	2.5
38	2	5.0	7.5
40	1	2.5	10.0
41	3	7.5	17.5
42	2	5.0	22.5
43	3	7.5	30.0
45	2	5.0	35.0
46	1	2.5	37.5
47	1	2.5	40.0
49	1	2.5	42.5
50	2	5.0	47.5
51	4	10.0	57.5
52	4	10.0	67.5
53	1	2.5	70.0
54	4	10.0	80.0
55	1	2.5	82.5
56	1	2.5	85.0
58	1	2.5	87.5
59	1	2.5	90.0
62	3	7.5	97.5
72	1	2.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	

Table 14A**RESPONDENTS' SELF CONCEPT T-SCORE SUMMARY**

T-SCORE	Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
31 – 40	2	4	10.0	10.0
41 – 59	3	32	80.0	90.0
60 – 70	4	3	7.5	97.5
70 +	5	1	2.5	100.0
Total		40	100.0	

Eighty percent of the respondents' self-concept scores fall within the normal to acceptable range, but four of the respondents' scores are below this range which might

indicate a low self-concept and also a disability. Four of the respondents' scored above the normal range. According to the Tennessee Self-Concept Manual this is a sign of over confidence or of individuals who are highly competitive. A closer look at this finding will be undertaken by the ANOVA later in this chapter and explained in Chapter 5 as it relates to other variables.

The students' academic self-concept scores indicate how well they evaluate their performance academically. Results reveal that respondents' scores are within the norm for passing and being successful in their educational settings and having a positive self concept toward education. Only ten of the students indicated that this might be a problem area. See Table 15.

Table 15

RESPONDENTS' "ACADEMIC" SELF-CONCEPT SCORES

Academic Score	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
34	2	5.0	5.0
37	2	5.0	10.0
38	2	5.0	15.0
39	1	2.5	17.5
40	5	12.5	30.0
41	2	5.0	35.0
42	3	7.5	42.5
43	4	10.0	52.5
45	1	2.5	55.0
46	2	5.0	60.0
47	4	10.0	70.0
48	4	10.0	80.0
49	4	10.0	90.0
50	1	2.5	92.5
51	1	2.5	95.0
54	1	2.5	97.5
64	1	2.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	

Table 15A
RESPONDENTS' "ACADEMIC" SELF-CONCEPT SCORE

Academic Score	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
31 – 40	10	25.0	25.0
41 – 59	27	67.5	92.5
60 – 70	3	7.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	

Sixty-eight percent of the students' academic self-concept scores, fall within the normal and acceptable range, but twenty-five percent of the students fall below this range which indicates a low self-concept and also a disability. Three of the students scored above the normal range. There is concern for a closer look at this finding which will be undertaken by the ANOVA later in this chapter and explained fully in chapter 5.

Data Analysis For The Study's Two Hypotheses

In testing the study's two hypotheses the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical tool was used to determine if the hypotheses should be rejected or accepted. The .05 (5%) level of significance was used as the deciding factor. Interaction among and between the factors were also analyzed for significance.

The hypothesis reads ---

There is no statistical significant difference in the relationship between students' self-concept and their academic performance as determined by the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale and students' grade point average.

The ANOVA findings cite a large F-value (9.585) for the main effect (t-score /academic-self/GPA) and thus the hypothesis should not be accepted. There is a significant difference in the relationship between students' self-concept scores and their level of performance for Hypothesis One. Hypothesis One must be rejected; see Analysis

of Variance, Appendix G, Table 7.

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the three interactions of the variables including Adolescent Racial Identification Questionnaire, A-Score, and GPA. The hypothesis reads ---

There is no statistical significant difference in the relationship between students' racial identification and their level academic achievement as determined by the Adolescent Racial Identification Questionnaire and students' grade point average, and the academic self-score of the TSCS.

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA; see Appendix G, Table 8) results indicate a small F-value (0.979) for the main effect (Adolescent Racial Identification and GPA) and thus the hypothesis should be accepted. Interactions with respondents of varying grade point averages reveal no significant findings between any given combinations. The researcher must accept Hypothesis Two as a true statement.

Conclusion

The information collected through the Demographic Profile Instrument, Adolescent Racial Identification Questionnaire (ARIQ), and the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale were tabulated and analyzed using the SPSS software package. Demographic data was summarized to identify the population. Data from the Adolescent Racial Identification Questionnaire were collected and presented to better profile the respondents and to ascertain how respondents' viewed racial issues and identified with the Adolescent Racial Identification Questionnaire. The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale was also used to solicit students' feedback about how they felt about themselves overall in addition to how they perceive themselves academically.

All of this information was necessary in addressing the two hypotheses of this

study. Again the Analysis of Variance statistical tool was best suited for this purpose. Hypothesis One was rejected. There was a significant finding and was thus rejected. A different result was obtained from Hypothesis Two. This hypothesis was accepted because no significance was found as a whole or between any of the student groupings.

Chapter 5 provides an explanation of the findings, conclusions, discussion, implication for counselors, and recommendations relevant to the population and research study.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions

The purpose of this study included examining the relationship between self-concept, academic achievement, and racial identification among at-risk African-American adolescent males. Analysis was determined through the use of the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS), academic achievement (as measured by students' grade point averages) and the Adolescent Racial Identification Questionnaire (ARIQ).

Survey design was used as a means of data collection. Forty respondents completed the TSCS, the ARIQ, and a demographic profile.

Summary of Findings

Demographics

Demographic findings for this study indicated that all survey respondents were between the ages of thirteen (13) and eighteen (18); the average age was 15.5. Students' grades ranged from eighth (8th) to twelfth (12th). There were twelve respondents who were enrolled in the ninth grade. They were the largest grade represented. Seven students documented that they had failed a class.

Regarding parents/guardianship, nearly fifty percent of the participants reported that they live with both parents. Results indicated that the majority of respondents reported that their parents either had attended college or were college graduates. They also shared that they had been influenced most by parents educationally. Thirty-one of

the forty respondents likewise indicated that they are also educationally motivated by peers.

Racial Identification

Racial preference in this study addressed a series of issues regarding race. It specifically reviewed the racial identity respondents chose to be called such as African-American, Black, or other. Most respondents indicated that they preferred to be associated with the term African-American. The majority of them also preferred to spend social hours with persons of the same race.

More than fifty percent indicated that they positively identified with racial values, traditions, and pride. Specifically, results here indicated that the respondents overwhelming identified with racial pride, celebrate ethnic holidays such as Kwanzaa, Black History Month, and Martin Luther King Day. They positively identified with race as a reason to celebrate the above ethnic holidays and affirmed their racial heritage by stating that it strongly promotes self pride. Additionally over seventy percent of all respondents shared that their peers thought that they exhibited racial, ethnic, and cultural pride.

Respondents documented that the racial heritage of their friends is African-American/Black by well over fifty percent and that they primarily socialize with persons of the same race. Hence, approximately one-fourth of them expressed (through the survey) that they socialize both with Blacks and Whites. Over seventy-five percent indicated that their teachers fully respect who they are as African-American students regardless of race.

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement as used in this study reflected students' grade point averages from the school that they currently attend. All but one had grade point averages of 2.0 or better (2.0 represents a C / average). Eight (nearly ten percent) of the forty had earned grade point averages of 3.0 or better (3.0 represents a B / above average).

Self-Concept

Respondents' "academic" self-concept scores indicated that the majority had average scores according to results of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale. More importantly this group of respondents indicated that their "Total Self-Concept" scores fell within average range for most. Only four of the forty survey respondents' results yielded low self-concept scores. Likewise, four of the forty indicated that they had above average self-concept scores according to the TSCS.

Hypotheses

Using Analysis of Variance to evaluate the statistical significant difference in the relationship between respondents' grade point averages and self-concept scores, the researcher had to reject Hypothesis One. It stated **there is no significant statistical difference in the relationship between students' self-concepts and their academic performance as determined by the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale and students' grade point averages.**

Hypothesis Two was accepted through the careful use of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for evaluating the statistical significant difference in the relationship between results of the Adolescent Racial Identification Questionnaire and respondents' grade point averages. Hypothesis Two stated **there is no significant statistical difference in the**

relationship between students' racial identification and their level of academic achievement as determined by the Adolescent Racial Identification Questionnaire, students' grade point averages, and the "academic self-score" of the TSCS.

Conclusion

Building on the information obtained from the literature review and the survey analysis, the principle researcher has developed a narrative based on these findings. This study was designed to evaluate at-risk African-American adolescents views on self-concept, academic, and racial identification. Thus, the thrust of this section rests on the principle researcher's position which 1.) advocates the importance of the three variables used in the study 2.) outlines specific programs/activities which should be useful when assisting the populations studied and 3.) provides insight on the counselor's role in helping to bring change to the school setting for the short and long-term benefit of each student.

Self-concept is important to an individual feeling good about himself/herself. It includes an individual's attitudes and perception of self. Thus, the self-image seems to form the core of who a person is and enables the person to better cope with life's challenges. Self-concept can influence a student's academic and social behavior. Regarding African-American adolescent males in this study, self-concept was statistically significant to students' grade point averages. Achievement can help to improve a student's self-concept.

Most students who feel good about themselves tend to do better in school. That is, the student who is confident feels free to take risks. This should allow him/her to accept challenges including those involving school life. It is worth noting that the student who feels overwhelmed with social hindrances may not so eagerly accept school challenges.

Therefore, counselors should facilitate dual roles as student helpers and professional consultants to the school community.

In order to change the current academic profile of at-risk males, more programs and activities must be implemented to address their needs. These may include (a.) mentoring programs, (b.) all-male clubs sponsored by male faculty and staff as well as men from the community, (c.) Career Day where the focus is “Men at work,” and (d.) an after-school tutorial program called “For Brothers Only.” Here academia would be the focus, but other male issues could be addressed and supported through grants and private funding. Grants and private funding could also support an all-male seminar to be held once per month on Saturdays for four months called “MINC – Men in Nontraditional Careers.” Here male students and counselors could gain useful information on nontraditional jobs, salaries, skills, education, and geographic regions needing specific jobs.

Additionally, a myriad of strategies must be used to deliver meaningful services to at-risk students. Strategies should include programs and activities that address the higher achiever as well as ones for the less motivated student. McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter (1997) postulate that all students are included in the at-risk continuum. As such emphasis needs to be placed on helping students to grow, soar, and maintain healthy habits for productive living. Additionally, early intervention programs should include living models who can show by example that the at-risk African-American adolescent male can beat the odds, overcome the stereotypes, cope with the racism and discrimination, and yet achieve success.

School personnel should receive appropriate training, perhaps through seminars and workshops on how to better assist at-risk African-American males. Hence, counselors are

encouraged to become trailblazers in this pursuit. They should align themselves with their building principals to redesign training programs for the ambiguous nature of this task. Counselors should help other persons develop new ways of doing things, such as teaching and communicating with students from different backgrounds.

Counselors should conduct student needs assessments to ascertain reasons that students do not succeed. They should also document and share information from parents, students, and significant others on what is working for those who are successful and why. Identifying intervention strategies and conducting follow-up activities is consideration for promoting positive results to the African-American adolescent male.

Positive self-concept activities should be a part of the curriculum for all students, especially those who are underachievers and not motivated towards school success. Counselors and educators should remind students that school success is important to future job opportunities. As a result, the school curriculum should be one that stresses high expectations for all students, instructional and behavior goals, careful monitoring of students' progress, and constant networking between the school, home, and the community.

Individual schools should work collaboratively to ensure student success. For example, schools should allow both teachers and students to participate in some of the decision-making. This concept can lead to empowerment and ownership of future outcomes regarding student life while at school. Furthermore, students can gain a sense of confidence in their decision-making and be held accountable for their actions and consequences.

The student's cultural background should be positively reflected throughout the school and community. As suggested in Chapter Two, the African-American culture helps to shape the core of his/her cognitive development and impacts how academic tasks are sometimes approached. Examples of this encompass African-American cultural learning styles to reflect the following:

- The African-American student can be very effective.
- The African-American student usually prefers oral-aural teaching, learning, and communication style.
- The African-American student can be highly social, creative, and sensitive to others nonverbal clues.

Racial identification and consciousness is part of the African-American experience and should not be perceived negatively. For this reason, only persons who respect their ideology should be encouraged to assist them, especially in settings where their growth and development are shaped. Counselors, educators, and other persons in the helping profession can help others to understand this concept by being open to discussions regarding racial issues. Sharing information about cultural distinctions and the sometimes various distinctions within one's culture are also worth noting.

Multicultural training should include a respect for one's cultural values, history, learning style, religious practices, apparel, and variations of these in reference to geographic locations, origins, and transitions. Additionally, this training should acknowledge that African-Americans face more social barriers than their European-American counterparts. Evidence suggests that these negative social problems can lead to

daily hassles and negative life events. Yet, according to Locke (1992) relying on prayer is a vital coping technique.

Counselors and administrators should help teachers and other school personnel to better understand the at-risk student by providing site-based workshops on how to maximize these student's potential for success. Counselors should share information on enrichment programs, such as Upward Bound, and help teachers and parents identify at-risk behavior. Workshops and literature could provide a more in-depth look at the problems that an at-risk student may face. Similarly, this could help teachers to minimize mis-diagnosed interpretations of overt or overt behaviors.

No particular program works for all students, neither is there a quick fix ready for all of their deficiencies. Therefore, counselors, educators, parents, and all stakeholders should continue to share ideas about what does work, continue to share large and small success stories, and continue to read, learn, implement, and change when necessary. African-American adolescent males need greater visibility on their positive attributes. Counselors should encourage others to highlight their positive gains.

Implications for Counselors

In traditional counselor education programs, emphasis is placed on the importance of counseling, consulting, and coordinating. Assuming this holds true for most counseling training programs, today's counselors should remain abreast of contemporary issues and needs of the student. This includes a clear level of awareness regarding program development, available resources, and cultural awareness. Effective counselors must move beyond traditional techniques to promoting positive reinforcement from a variety of people over a longer time span (McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter, 1998).

The effective counselor must also lend counseling, consulting, and coordinating practices to special education settings, community based programs, and innovative peer network support programs that are culturally relevant. Additionally, the effective counselor should promote competency necessary for basic survival. This counselor may also find it necessary to help the student to understand and differentiate between survival skills needed for his/her social environment (subculture) as opposed to survival skills which will lead to a lifestyle of upward mobility.

It is further recommended that the effective counselor remains knowledgeable of changing trends in education. These trends could include, but are not limited to, various types of educational settings that will help to prepare young people for the world such as all-male schools, vocational schools, charter schools, alternative schools, and comprehensive schools. Though these educational placements are diverse in daily operations, they have a common goal of providing an education that will lead to a high school diploma, promoting a positive sense of self, and helping to create and develop productive citizens.

In summary, it is the responsibility of adults to provide proper growth experiences that will lead to student success. The idea that this generation of current adolescents have been labeled “Generation X” and that African-American males are referred to as an “Endangered Species” is indicative of the fact that there is much work to be done. In addition to the routine issues facing this population of crime, poverty, drugs, female-headed households, inadequate education, and racism, the focus must remain on symbols of success instead of negative trends.

Counselors can assist in this endeavor by implementing and modeling techniques that are suitable for the subjects served. One counseling technique that this writer recommends for at-risk African-American males is Reality Therapy. This approach can be most useful as it relates to African-American males, “responsibility,” and experiencing success. It is also useful for other reasons such as minimizing past mistakes or failures, it is goal oriented, and reviews consequences of behavior. It focuses on current situations and future outcomes, relying on the here and now while ignoring the past. Finally, this theory is suggested for counselors’ use because it addresses simple issues of right and wrong and recommends establishing a commitment to change when needed.

Recommendation for Future Research

This study analyzed the relationships between self-concept, academic, achievement, and racial identification among at-risk African-American adolescent males. To further support at-risk African-American adolescent males recommendations for future research include the following:

1. Replication of this study to reflect more subjects from the rural, urban, and suburban areas.
2. Replication of this study to include females as subjects, instead of males, which include a larger population. This replication could have as its focus students from public schools compared to students who attend private schools.
3. A case study that would investigate the impact of African-American principals’ leadership styles on at-risk African-American males.
4. A comparative study of African-American males who attend homogeneous schools versus those African-American males who attend schools with heterogeneous

populations. This investigation could also highlight various achievement levels and self-concept.

Discussion

African-American adolescent males, like other students, could greatly benefit from a more supportive network of persons from home, school, and the community. Significant “others” could also afford them an opportunity to diffuse problems that affect their social and intellectual growth and development. The review of the literature describes the period of adolescent development as one marked by a lack of guidance from adults (see Chapter Two). The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1996) also describes it as a period of academic difficulty. Eric Erickson (1968) referenced this period as one of change and new “identity.”

As such, helping at-risk African-American adolescent males to develop through a sense of purpose and high expectation will empower them to become more confident, disciplined, and positive self-advocates. This could likewise provide them with the confidence needed to more successfully cope with other problems such as underachievement in school, inappropriate/oppositional behavior, poor decision making, and issues relevant to racism and discrimination.

The data which suggests that African-American males lag behind other peer groups is well documented (see Chapter One). Counselors, educators, and other student persons across the nation continue to ponder ways and means of raising academic achievement levels for at-risk Black males who are not maximizing their potential. Ogbu (1978, 1988, 1991) argues that African-American students mentally withdraw from the schooling process as a reaction to racial consciousness, discrimination, and cultural isolation from

America's educational systems. Jacqueline Irvine (1991) builds on this theory by writing that the problems, with African-American students and academic achievement are a result of poor correspondence due to cultural differences. Simply put, racial tensions remain a constant force that impedes the progress of students. This is one of the many reasons that the counselor's role as consultant is vitally needed as a change agent. The counselor should promote racial harmony and ease both covert and overt racial tensions for students and staff. This growth should assist in creating a warmer school climate for all who are involved.

This study was founded on the idea that schools share the responsibility of providing growth and nurturing experiences for today's youth. Hence, research suggests that if schools are going to be effective, adjustments in the student's learning environment are bound to occur (Irvine, 1991). These changes should occur between both parent and child, teacher, counselor, administrator, and other school personnel. That is, the responsibility for instilling productivity in the school, home, and society at-large must be shared by many.

It must be emphasized that in an effort to assist at-risk African-American adolescent males, a myriad of resource agencies must become involved. This is so because many social ills beyond the school environment place them at-risk (Refer to Chapter Two).

As an African-American educator, observing students' academic, social, and emotional growth has become a major concern. The status of student achievement has puzzling implications. For example, one primary concern is that far too many students fail to envision the relationship between educational attainment and future life plans. Too many of these students are apathetic with regard to their educational experience. Though

ironic, many maintain high self-concepts while also displaying low achievement rates. On the other hand this researcher understands their emotional pain as one who has observed racial discrimination within the school setting. It is therefore recommended that more on-site racial sensitivity workshops are facilitated.

Unique to this study of at-risk African-American adolescent males is the fact that over eighty percent of respondents reported that they have never repeated a grade.

Dennis Kimbro (1994) and Kwanzza Kunjufu (1996) advocate positive self-concepts and high self-esteem as a vehicle to promote successful life and school experiences. They maintain that low self-esteem, on the other hand, impedes progress. Interestingly, upon a careful review of published and unpublished literature African-American students did not show evidence of low self-concept. This study is consistent with other research findings. Respondents in this study overwhelmingly indicated average to high self-concept scores according to the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale.

Due to this result, the principle researcher here suggests aid to students in feeling good about academic endeavors. This will begin the cycle of minimizing the growing numbers of at-risk African-American males who are placed in Special Education Class(es). Personal observation has also demonstrated that many at-risk males are intelligent enough to be enrolled in regular education classes (as opposed to Special Education). Yet, due to poor motivation (Thompson, 1992) they do not succeed. Motivation used within this study pertains to a desire for positive action. Poor grades are a response to problems of motivational levels (Joseph, 1996, Asante, 1995, Biggs, 1992).

Edwards and Polite (1992) maintain that regardless of the obstacle, the goal of African American men or adolescent males should always be to overcome. It remains

evident that in spite of the many social ills and realistic barriers that confront this group of young people, environmental stressors can be better managed through proper interventions.

Even though success is oftentimes measured by what one has (Edwards and Polite) acknowledge the significance of success in terms of victory over obstacles and triumphs over struggles. Thusly, student success is important for at-risk African-American males, and provides a clear and positive demeanor with reference to self-concept, academic achievement and racial identification.

APPENDIX A

Appendix A

To: Susan Weinberg, Director of Research

From: Deborah E. James

Date: July 27, 1998

RE: Self-Concept Surveys

Recently my dissertations committee approved the use of the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale for my doctoral dissertation entitled “The Relationship Between Self-Concept, Academic Achievement, and Racial Identification.” Due to limited funding, the cost for this project exceeds my anticipated cost. I have, therefore, enclosed a brief abstract regarding my study for your perusal. Also, I humbly requesting a reduction in cost for one manual and twenty booklets/computerized answer sheets for completion of this final assignment. Please fax return information to Deborah James at (770) 879-3690.

Your positive response is appreciated.

To: Susan Weinberg, Director of Research

From: Victoria W. Martin, Ph.D.

Date: September 21, 1998

RE: Deborah E. James TSCS Request

Pursuant to your fax written to Deborah E. James, dated July 31, 1998, I am pleased to confirm that she is a doctoral student at Clark Atlanta University. Ms. James is seeking an educational discount for the purchase and administration of the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale for inclusion in her dissertation. She has been advised of potential discounts through your office and states that this memo will assist her in that endeavor.

As faculty advisor to her, I am aware of the ethical practices and supervision needed for completion of this project. As such, please be aware that administration of the TSCS will be conducted under my guidance and supervision.

Your cooperation of her efforts is appreciated. Please forward your written response to Ms. James' attention at fax number: (770) 879-3690.

4939 Oakdale Road #2K
Smyrna, GA 30080
July 27, 1998

Dr. Ruby Byrd, Director
Upward Bound Program
Morehouse College
Atlanta, GA 30314

Dear Dr. Byrd:

I am a doctoral student at Clark Atlanta University and need your assistance to complete my current research study. I am conducting a survey and would appreciate your permission to allow the African-American male students, who are enrolled in the Upward Bound Program, to participate during Orientation Week scheduled for October. This investigation addresses self concept, academic achievement, and racial identification of the aforementioned group. Since there are two surveys, approximately thirty minutes will be required to complete the forms. Confidentiality of the respondents will be maintained. I shall be happy to supply you with a copy of each form for your perusal.

Your positive written response is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Deborah E. James
Doctoral Student
Department of Counseling and
Human Development
Clark Atlanta University

APPENDIX B

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4 pages total

*If there are any questions about this transmission,
please call 310-478-2061, ext. 123*

DATE: July 31, 1998
TO: Deborah James
FROM: Susan Dunn Weinberg
Assistant to the President
WPS Rights and Permissions
RE: Your July 27 request

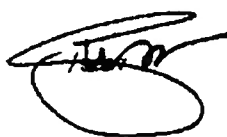
Thank you for your interest in using the *Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Second Edition* (TSCS:2) in your doctoral study. See the accompanying pages for current ordering information.

Regarding cost reductions, you should be eligible for a WPS Research Discount, but I need one last piece of information from you. Please arrange for your supervising faculty member to send, on your institution's letterhead, a letter stating that s/he will supervise your use of TSCS:2 materials in accord with recognized, professional and ethical principles. *The letter of supervision should be sent to my attention, and should note that a discount is pending for you.*

For the sake of expediency, you may fax the letter to my attention at 310/478-7838.

On receipt of the requested letter of supervision, I should be able to provide to you a Memorandum of Discount Authorization, which will allow you to take 50% off all computerized components for the TSCS:2, and 20% off all other TSCS:2 materials (including kits).

Please feel free to call me at 310/478-2061, ext. 123, if you have any questions.



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- The estimated number of students who will be enrolled in the course(s), including their level of study (i.e., masters, doctorate).
- A list of WPS proprietary test(s) to be taught in conjunction with the course curricula, including the maximum quantities of specific test components to be purchased.

On receipt of the required information and approval of the request, WPS will promptly mail to the instructor a Certificate of Discount Authorization. Please do not apply for a WPS Educational Discount concurrently when placing an order. *The original WPS Certificate of Discount Authorization must accompany your order; WPS will not accept photocopies or faxed copies of our certificate as proof of discount authorization.* We suggest you allow seven to ten business days for pre-approval of an Educational Discount.

Research Discounts

To aid researchers, WPS offers Research Discounts of 20% and 50% against the cost of WPS-published test materials needed for qualified scholarly studies. To apply, the principal investigator should send a letter that includes:

- A brief summary of the nature of the study, including estimated period of completion.
- Estimated quantities of specific WPS test components needed to conduct the research.
- A statement describing how and to whom the results of the research will be distributed.

On approval, WPS will send to the researcher a WPS Memorandum of Discount Authorization that allows 50% off computerized components and 20% off all other test components, including kits. Among its conditions, the Memorandum requests that the results of the study be shared with WPS. Discount applications from student researchers must be accompanied by a letter from a supervising faculty member, on the institution's letterhead, which states that s/he will supervise the student's use of specifically named test material in accord with recognized professional and ethical principles.

Proprietary Note

For mutual protection, please note that any translation, adaptation or other type of reproduction of copyrighted WPS materials, without the prior written consent of WPS, is in violation of international law and professional ethics.

APPENDIX C

Appendix C

The School

As it is in general
(Analytical)

Rules
Standardization
Conformity
Memory for specific facts
Regularity
Rigid order
"Normality"
Differences equal deficits
Preconceive
Precision
Logical
Atomistic
Egocentric
Convergent
Controlled
Meanings are universal
Direct
Cognitive
Linear
Mechanical
Unison
Hierarchical
Isolation
Deductive
Scheduled
Thing focused
Constant
Sign oriented
Duty

As it could be
(Relational)

Freedom
Variation
Creativity
Memory for essence
Novelty
Flexibility
Uniqueness
Sameness equals oppression
Improvise
Approximate
Psychological
Global
Sociocentric
Divergent
Expressive
Meanings are contextual
Indirect
Affective
Patterned
Humanistic
Individual in group
Democratic
Integration
Inductive
Targets of opportunity
People focused
Evolving
Meaning oriented
Loyalty

APPENDIX D

Appendix D

Adolescent Racial Identification Questionnaire

Directions: Read the following questions and mark an (X) or an appropriate answer in the blank that best describes your views.

1. Are you proud to be an African-American?
a) yes _____ b) no _____ c) n/a _____
- 1a. Which one of the following would you prefer to be called?
a) African-American _____ b) Black _____ c) Other, please specify _____
2. Do you celebrate ethnic holidays such as Kwanzaa, Martin Luther King Day, or Black History Month?
a) yes _____ b) no _____
3. If your response to number two was yes, do you or have you done so because you are African-American/Black?
a) yes _____ b) no _____ c) n/a _____
4. Do these holidays make you feel better about your Blackness or racial heritage?
a) yes _____ b) no _____
5. Are you ever positively influenced by your African ancestry?
a) yes _____ b) no _____ c) n/a _____
6. Are your feelings about yourself improved due to your racial identity?
a) yes _____ b) no _____
7. Do you feel that your peers think you have a strong racial identity?
a) yes _____ b) no _____
8. Regarding your close friends and associates, what is their race?
a) African-American/Black _____ b) White _____
c) Some of both _____ d) Other _____
9. When attending social gatherings such as sports events, parties, and/or "hanging out", with whom do you attend these events most often?
a) Blacks _____ b) Whites _____ c) Some of both _____ d) Other _____
10. To what extent do you feel your teachers respect you as an African American student?
a) Totally _____ b) Average _____ c) Somewhat _____ d) None _____

Name _____

Examiner's Name _____

Administration Date _____

Age (Required) _____

1 = Always False
 2 = Mostly False
 3 = Partly False and Partly True
 4 = Mostly True
 5 = Always True

- 1 2 3 4 5 1. I am an attractive person.
 1 2 3 5 2. I am an honest person.
 1 2 3 4 5 3. I am a member of a happy family.
 1 2 3 4 5 4. I wish I could be more trustworthy.
 1 2 3 4 5 5. I do not feel at ease with other people.
 1 2 3 4 5 6. Math is hard for me.
 1 2 3 4 5 7. I am a friendly person.
 1 2 3 4 5 8. I am satisfied with my moral behavior.
 1 2 3 4 5 9. I am not as smart as the people around me.
 1 2 3 4 5 10. I do not act the way my family thinks I should.
 1 2 3 4 5 11. I am just as nice as I should be.
 1 2 3 4 5 12. It is easy for me to learn new things.
 1 2 3 4 5 13. I am satisfied with my family relationships.
 1 2 3 4 5 14. I am not the person I would like to be.
 1 2 3 4 5 15. I understand my family as well as I should.
 1 2 3 4 5 16. I despise myself.
 1 2 3 4 5 17. I don't feel as well as I should.
 1 2 3 4 5 18. I do well at math.
 1 2 3 4 5 19. I am satisfied to be just what I am.
 1 2 3 4 5 20. I get along well with other people.

Continue unless you have been instructed to stop at Item 20.

- 1 2 3 4 5 21. I have a healthy body.
 1 2 3 4 5 22. I consider myself a sloppy person.
 1 2 3 4 5 23. I am a decent sort of person.
 1 2 3 4 5 24. I try to run away from my problems.
 1 2 3 4 5 25. I am a cheerful person.
 1 2 3 4 5 26. I am a nobody.
 1 2 3 4 5 27. My family would always help me with any kind of trouble.
 1 2 3 4 5 28. I get angry sometimes.
 1 2 3 4 5 29. I am full of aches and pains.
 1 2 3 4 5 30. I am a sick person.
 1 2 3 4 5 31. I am a morally weak person.
 1 2 3 4 5 32. Other people think I am smart.
 1 2 3 4 5 33. I am a hateful person.
 1 2 3 4 5 34. I am losing my mind.
 1 2 3 4 5 35. I am not loved by my family.
 1 2 3 4 5 36. I feel that my family doesn't trust me.
 1 2 3 4 5 37. I am not good at the work I do.
 1 2 3 4 5 38. I am mad at the whole world.
 1 2 3 4 5 39. I am hard to be friendly with.
 1 2 3 4 5 40. Once in a while I think of things too bad to talk about.
 1 2 3 4 5 41. Sometimes when I am not feeling well, I am cross.

continue on back

Adult Form

TSCS:2

AutoScore™ Form

W. H. Fitts, Ph.D. and W. L. Warren, Ph.D.

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 Publishers and Distributors

Gender: ☒ Male ☐ Female

Grade/Years of Education Completed

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <7 | <input type="checkbox"/> 9 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12 | <input type="checkbox"/> 15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> 10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 13 | <input type="checkbox"/> 16 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 11 | <input type="checkbox"/> 14 | <input type="checkbox"/> >16 |

Ethnicity

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Native American |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Black | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> White |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Directions

This scale asks you to describe how you feel about yourself. There are no right or wrong answers, so please just describe yourself as honestly as you can. When you are ready to begin, read each statement and decide how well it describes you according to the scale below. Read each statement carefully. Then circle the number that shows your answer. Circle only one number for each statement, using this scale:

Answer 1 if the statement is ALWAYS FALSE.

Answer 2 if the statement is MOSTLY FALSE.

Answer 3 if the statement is PARTLY FALSE AND PARTLY TRUE.

Answer 4 if the statement is MOSTLY TRUE.

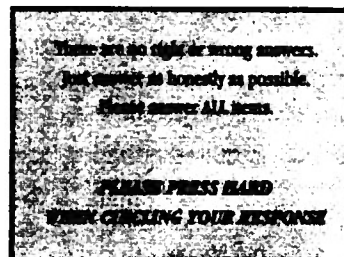
Answer 5 if the statement is ALWAYS TRUE.

If you wish to change a response, cross it out with an X, and circle the new response you have chosen.

PLEASE PRESS HARD WHEN CIRCULING YOUR RESPONSE

1 = Always False
 2 = Mostly False
 3 = Partly False and Partly True
 4 = Mostly True
 5 = Always True

- 1 2 3 4 5 42. I am neither too fat nor too thin.
 1 2 3 4 5 43. I'll never be as smart as other people.
 1 2 3 4 5 44. I like to work with numbers.
 1 2 3 4 5 45. I am as sociable as I want to be.
 1 2 3 4 5 46. I have trouble doing the things that are right.
 1 2 3 4 5 47. Once in a while I laugh at a dirty joke.
 1 2 3 4 5 48. I should have more sex appeal.
 1 2 3 4 5 49. I shouldn't tell so many lies.
 1 2 3 4 5 50. I can't read very well.
 1 2 3 4 5 51. I treat my parents as well as I should.
 1 2 3 4 5 52. I am too sensitive about the things people in my family say.
 1 2 3 4 5 53. I should love my family more.
 1 2 3 4 5 54. I am satisfied with the way I treat other people.
 1 2 3 4 5 55. I ought to get along better with people.
 1 2 3 4 5 56. I gossip a little at times.
 1 2 3 4 5 57. Sometimes I feel like swearing.
 1 2 3 4 5 58. I take good care of myself physically.
 1 2 3 4 5 59. I try to be careful about my appearance.
 1 2 3 4 5 60. I am true to my religion in my everyday actions.
 1 2 3 4 5 61. I sometimes do very bad things.
 1 2 3 4 5 62. I can always take care of myself in any situation.
 1 2 3 4 5 63. I do as well as I want to at almost any job.
 1 2 3 4 5 64. I feel good most of the time.
 1 2 3 4 5 65. I take a real interest in my family.
 1 2 3 4 5 66. I try to understand the other person's point of view.
 1 2 3 4 5 67. I'd rather win a game than lose one.
 1 2 3 4 5 68. I am not good at games and sports.
 1 2 3 4 5 69. I look fine just the way I am.
 1 2 3 4 5 70. I do not know how to work well.
 1 2 3 4 5 71. I have trouble sleeping.
 1 2 3 4 5 72. I do what is right most of the time.
 1 2 3 4 5 73. I am no good at all in social situations.
 1 2 3 4 5 74. I solve my problems quite easily.
 1 2 3 4 5 75. I am a bad person.
 1 2 3 4 5 76. I am satisfied with my relationship with God.
 1 2 3 4 5 77. I quarrel with my family.
 1 2 3 4 5 78. I see something good in everyone I meet.
 1 2 3 4 5 79. I find it hard to talk with strangers.
 1 2 3 4 5 80. Sometimes I put off until tomorrow what I ought to do today.
 1 2 3 4 5 81. It's easy for me to understand what I read.
 1 2 3 4 5 82. I have a lot of self-control.



APPENDIX E

Appendix E**Statement of Agreement**

I, _____, agree to be a participant in this study. I agree to answer each question to the best of my ability. I understand that this study will be part of a professional dissertation which may be used at a later date for publication. The study involves African American male students and attempts to find out more about these young people. I further understand that my name will not be used on any form or included in any publication of this research. No one will be able to identify these forms by names. Upon completion, I will return all materials to the examiner. This study is strictly confidential.

Your participation of this research project is appreciated.

Signature

Date

Parental or Guardian Signature

Date

APPENDIX F

Appendix F

July 8, 1998

Dear Ms. James:

I am in receipt of your request to conduct research on African-American Adolescent Males using students who are enrolled in one of our TRIO Programs. We welcome your research as it will reflect many variables and behavioral patterns of this student population. As mentioned earlier in conversation, this research will assist us in further program development. Hopefully, it can also be used to assist the nation in overcoming barriers that impede some African-American Adolescent Males from performing at their maximum potential.

Best wishes in all you do!

Sincerely,



Ruby Byrd, Ph.D.
Director of TRIO Programs

Over a Century of Service Building Men

830 Westview Drive, S.W., Atlanta, Georgia 30314-3773 • Tel: (404) 681-2800

100% Funding Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education

APPENDIX G

Appendix G**ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE 1****RGPA BY RTSCORE**

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Signif of F
Main Effects	.570	2	.285	1.583	.490
RTSCORE	.570	2	.285	1.583	.490
Explained	.570	2	.285	1.583	.490
Residual	.180	1	.180		
Total	.750	3	.250		

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE 2**RGPA BY RASSELF**

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Signif of F
Main Effects	.868	4	.217	1.516	.296
RASSELF	.868	4	.217	1.516	.296
Explained	.868	4	.217	1.516	.296
Residual	1.002	7	.143		
Total	1.870	11	.170		

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE 3**RTSCORE BY RASSELF**

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Signif of F
Main Effects	179.967	4	44.992	2.820	.110
RASSELF	179.967	4	44.992	2.820	.110
Explained	179.967	4	44.992	2.820	.110
Residual	111.700	7	15.957		
Total	291.667	11	26.515		

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE 4**CALLED BY GPA, FRACE**

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Signif of F
Main Effects	2.528	4	.632	1.609	.195
GPA	.176	2	.088	.224	.801
FRACE	1.483	2	.742	1.88	.167
2-way Interactions	.016	1	.016	.040	.844
GPA FRACE	.016	1	.016	.040	.844
Explained	2.544	5	.509	1.295	.289
Residual	13.356	34	.393		
Total	15.900	39	.408		

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE 5**GPA BY CALLED, FRACE**

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Signif of F
Main Effects	1.486	4	.372	1.975	.121
CALLED	.098	2	.049	.260	.772
FRACE	.934	2	.467	2.483	.099
2-way Interactions	.081	2	.040	.214	.808
CALLED FRACE	.081	2	.040	.214	.808
Explained	1.567	6	.261	1.388	.249
Residual	6.208	33	.188		
Total	7.775	39	.199		

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE 6**GPA BY TSCORE, ASSELF**

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Signif of F
Main Effects	3.654	4	.914	10.532	.000
TSCORE	3.294	3	1.098	12.658	.000
ASSELF	.067	1	.067	.769	.387
2-way Interactions	.684	1	.684	7.887	.009
TSCORE ASSELF	.684	1	.684	7.887	.009
Explained	4.338	5	.868	10.003	.000
Residual	2.689	31	.087		
Total	7.027	36	.195		

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE 7

TSCORE BY ASSELF, GPA

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Signif of F
Main Effects	4.857	3	1.619	9.585	.000
ASSELF	.002	1	.002	.011	.916
GPA	4.636	2	2.318	13.723	.000
2-way Interactions	.712	1	.712	4.213	.048
ASSELF GPA	.712	1	.712	4.213	.048
Explained	5.568	4	1.392	8.242	.000
Residual	5.405	32	.169		
Total	10.973	36	.305		

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE 8

CALLED BY ASSELF, GPA

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Signif of F
Main Effects	2.938	3	.979	2.761	.058
ASSELF	2.113	1	2.113	5.957	.020
GPA	.376	2	.188	.529	.594
2-way Interactions	.792	1	.792	2.232	.145
ASSELF GPA	.792	1	.792	2.232	.145
Explained	3.730	4	.932	2.629	.053
Residual	11.351	32	.355		
Total	15.081	36	.419		

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